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## CONJUGAL SINS.

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# CONJUGAL SINS

AGAINST THE

LAWS OF LIFE AND HEALTH

AND

292

THEIR EFFECTS UPON THE FATHER, MOTHER  
AND CHILD.

*Presented by  
A. M. Purdy*

BY

AUGUSTUS K. GARDNER, A.M., M.D.

LATE PROFESSOR OF DISEASES OF FEMALES AND CLINICAL MIDWIFERY  
IN THE NEW YORK MEDICAL COLLEGE

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TO  
THE REVEREND CLERGY  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES,  
WHO BY EXAMPLE AND INSTRUCTION HAVE THE POWER  
TO ARREST THE RAPID EXTINCTION  
OF THE  
Native American People;  
TO  
PREVENT THE BRUTALIZING OF THEIR BODIES, AND THE  
DEGRADATION OF THEIR SENSIBILITIES—  
WITH THE HOPE THAT THIS EARNEST EFFORT MAY CONVINCE THEM  
OF THEIR DUTY IN THE PREMISES—  
THIS WORK IS  
MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED  
BY  
THE AUTHOR.



## INTRODUCTION.

*I have written this book because some professional statement seemed necessary to support the opinions very generally entertained by the community, enunciated by the Rev. Bishop Coxe of Western N.Y., in his pastoral address\* to his people, and promulgated by the resolutions of the Presbyterian Assembly held in this city last spring;† also by Rev. Mr. Frothingham in a series of articles in the TRIBUNE, in the spring of 1868; by Rev. Mr. Higginson, in various pungent magazine articles; by Dr. Allen of Lowell, Mass., in his Report to the Massachusetts State Legislature, on Hygiene; and by many other thinkers of the day.*

*These statements are no crude utterances of rhapsodists, thoughtless demagogues, or ambitious, charlatan sensationalists. They are the care-*

\* See Appendix. † See Appendix.

*fully expressed opinions of thoughtful and conscientious men, aiming to repress wrong-doing, to promote virtue, to guard against “the sins which do so easily beset us.” They point out a great social evil, perhaps originating in ignorance of its moral wrong-doing, its physical injury and its reactive nervous disabilities.*

*I have written this book, in the second place, because I thought myself qualified to do it. Twenty-five years spent in the almost exclusive study and practice of that particular branch of my profession, known as the Diseases of Females, have taught me to feel that I know something about these diseases, and seem to authorize me to speak with some authority upon these kindred themes; and to essay to stem the tide of error, sin and misery with which the community is being overwhelmed by unholy practices, the result of which we see deplored in the public press of the day, which warns us that the American race is fast dying out, and that its place is being filled by emigrants of different lineage, religion, political ideas and education.*

*Nearly ten years ago, I published in the KNICKERBOCKER MAGAZINE, an article on “The Causes*

*of the Physical Decline of American Women,\* which was intended for, and served as a warning. This article was very generally welcomed, and has ever since been freely referred to and quoted from by numerous writers on this kindred topic. The present work is but an extension and amplification of the same idea, fortified by subsequent investigations, and supported by the opinions of other writers all over the world. From those of England, France† and Germany I have freely quoted, and have endeavored to make my second reason evident to the readers of the following pages.*

*It has been difficult to express the ideas of the present work in language which should neither be too technical for general understanding, nor more explicit than was actually necessary for popular appreciation. The delicacy of the theme requires some reticence of expression, which it is hoped will not lead to misapprehension. It has been my constant aim to present the idea so fully, as to make the desired impression upon the minds of my readers, and yet so guardedly, as not to min-*

\* See Appendix. † From Mayer I have quoted freely.

*ister to the prurient curiosity of the thoughtless or the depraved.*

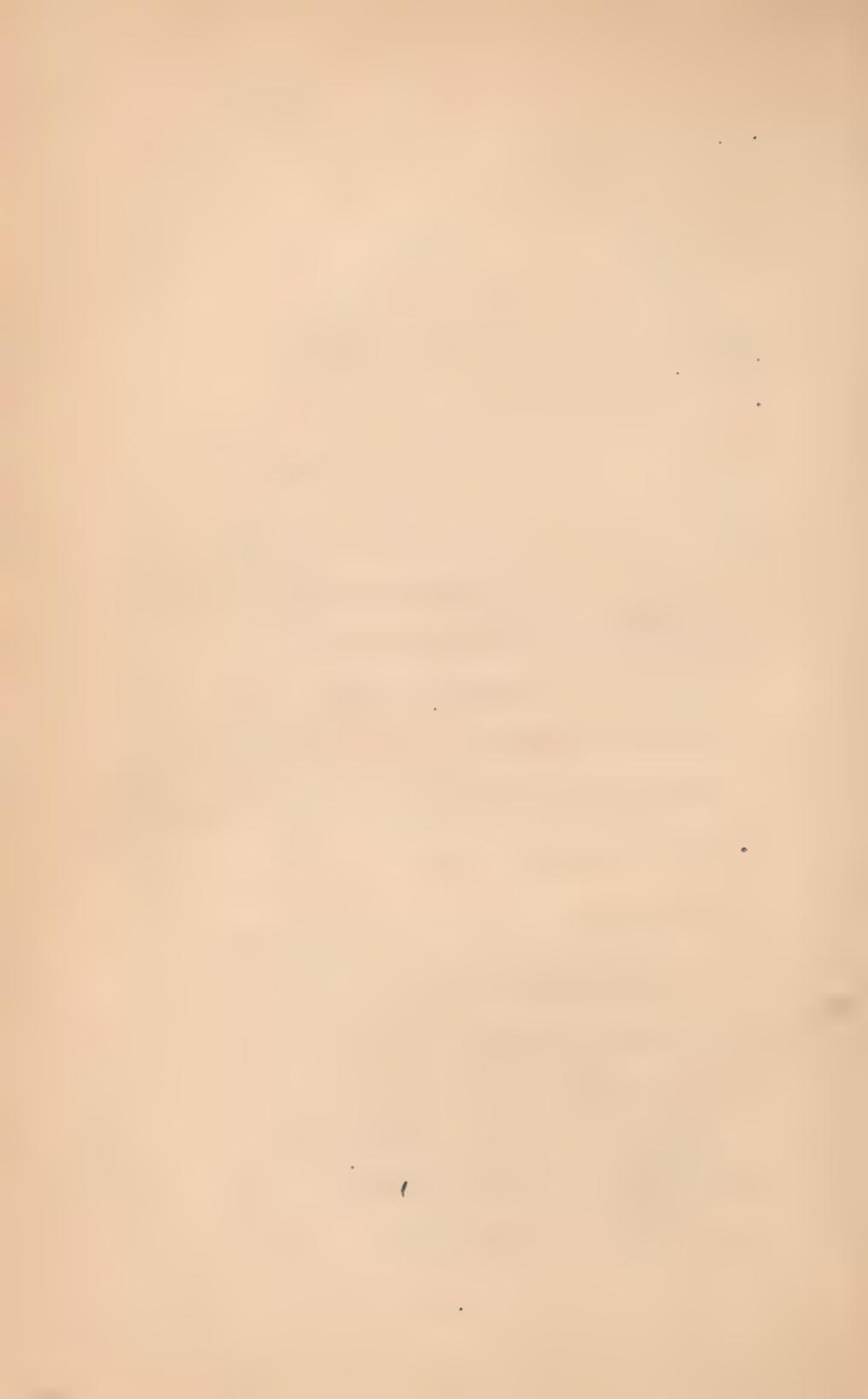
*With this statement of the reasons which have impelled me to write this work—entered upon with much reluctance, carried on amid the bustle of a busy life, and completed with many hopes of benefits to accrue from the time, thought and prayers and fears excited by it—it is submitted to the world, hopefully and confidingly.*

*237 East 13th Street, New York*

*Jan. 1st, 1870.*

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# CONJUGAL SINS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE MODERN WOMAN'S PHYSICAL DETERIORATION.

IT has been a matter of common observation that the physical status of the women of Christendom has been gradually deteriorating; that their mental energies were uncertain and spasmodic; that they were nervous and irritable; that they were prematurely care-worn, wrinkled and enervated; that they became subject to a host of diseases scarcely ever known to the professional medical men of past times, but now familiar to, and the common talk of, the matrons, and often, indeed, of the youngest females in the community; that a numerous class of specialists has arisen within a quarter of a century, devoting

their whole energies to the investigation of the actualities of these complaints, to the inventing of new instruments for the observation and diagnosis of these physical lesions, and in seeking, by mechanical appliances and by curative agencies of every description, to remedy these diseases, some of which are most terrible in their manifestations, and all of them disastrous, by actual physical suffering either co-existing with them or which they produce, or the result of remote nervous complications created by their presence, rendering the days and nights of their unhappy possessors, hours of uselessness, and often of actual misery, and making of life itself a burden which is worse than valueless.

For a period, such a flood of these new and obscure diseases came upon the profession, that they had no leisure to seek for their causes. Every energy was devoted to the observation of the present actualities, to tracing obscure nervous debility through the sympathetic system till it was localized and made tangible and observable to the senses, in some lesion, in localities obscure and hitherto unsus-

pected as the nidus of such general constitutional disturbance.

It took many years for the profession to do this, for so slight were the external and visible manifestations, that it was deemed impossible for these apparently trivial ulcerations and dis-organizations to be the causes of such a train of serious symptoms; often, too, very remotely situated from the primeval cause. Gradually, however, light began to dawn upon the observing eye. The relation of one part of the body to the other was seen to be established through the nervous system, as the two hemispheres of the world itself are connected by the Atlantic cables.

To the older men of the profession, these diseases have never been made evident, and it is only since the younger and unbiased men have come up, that real progress has been made—the result of continued observations and carefully conducted deductions.

The first in order has been to determine upon what diseases so varied a train of symptoms have depended. Next, and by far the easiest, after attaining to this diagnosis,

through numerous instrumentalities to be also discovered or initiated, was the treatment, curative or remedial, for them. This has been found, improved upon, altered and perfected. The treatment of these various complaints is now as simple and as potent as is the diagnosis and treatment of any of the ills of flesh.

We now come to a new and as yet but very imperfectly explored and understood field of inquiry, viz: the causes of these numerous diseases.

For a long period our patients were accustomed to inquire if these were not new diseases, as their ancestors never heard of them; and many of the less advanced of the profession were habituated to turn up their scientific noses at the specialist, and intimate, with more or less plainness, that the diseases existed only in the imagination of the sufferer, and the dishonest, magnifying perceptions of the specialist.

Even the erudite practitioner himself was for a long time deceived; he supposed that the fact was, that careful attention was now first directed to these recondite diseases, and

aided by new means of exploration and examination—the speculum, the uterine sound and the microscope—that he had only discovered for the first time, pathological causes of many heretofore obscure symptoms and illy understood general affections, long existing as unknown diseases. This, however, was but partially true. While, undoubtedly, these diseases are in nowise to be esteemed as new complaints, their frequency and importance are now greatly in excess of any former appearance.

The refinements of modern life—the listless and enervated condition of the modern woman—the pampered ease which riches and fashion and “the latest improvements” have brought in their train—the corrupt air of crowded cities—the neglect of healthy occupation—the change from the active house-keeper of our forefathers’ pattern, to the vacuity of mind and flabbiness of muscle of the ornamental women of the present epoch, “who toil not, neither do they spin”—the alteration from the period when the woman “called the name of her first-born Gad, for

she said a troop cometh," to the present time when women in every station in life sedulously seek to diminish the number of their offspring —these, and many other changes in the life of the women of to-day, have undoubtedly greatly increased the proportion of these disorders, so that now few, if any, of the better class, but who at some time in their career do not find themselves affected by some one or other of these complaints.

To these and other general causes may be attributed all of these complaints, and this opinion is confirmed by the fact, that they are not confined to any class of the community, but that they are to be found in the humblest as well as the highest walks of life, among the religious as well as the irreligious, the moral as the corrupt, in the child, the young woman, as well as the old, among the unmarried alike with the married, with the barren as well as with the mother of a large family.

Time, however, brings out the truth, and while all these observations are found to be correct, continued investigation developed an important fact, which is the key to the whole

matter—that there is great difference in the proportion in which these complaints affect the various classes of females, partially enumerated above. Thus, while it is found that these diseases are not specific, but general, limited to no class, but common to all, yet they are very infrequent in children, rare in the virgin of any age; less common as the life is quiet and healthy, and only frequent and persistent in the class of females who live irregular lives or tamper with their health by attempting to interfere with the laws of life and the economy of their nature.

## CHAPTER II.

### LOCAL DISEASE IN CHILDREN, AND ITS CAUSES.

IT would be foreign to the purpose of this work to enter into any description, or even to mention the names of the numerous ailments designated as "female diseases." In previous works I have undertaken this task, and have prepared elaborate treatises on each and all of them, which serve alike for the study of the aspirant and for refreshing the memory of the practitioner.

My present object is to seek for the causes of these formidable complaints, and by drawing attention to them to prevent their continuance, or at least to greatly diminish their frequency.

It has already been stated, that in rare cases, almost all the complaints so common to adult life, are to be noted in children of very imma-

ture years. Many of them are the result of a want of local cleanliness, the neglect of mothers and nurses—the consequence of local injuries—the local symptoms of a general strumous or cachectic diathesis—an hereditary catarrhal irritation. These troubles are more or less exhausting in their character, and variously affect their possessor, as she may be robust or delicate.

It is the misfortune of the times that there are no children. We have infants, but no intermediate steps of adolescence, between it and maturity, that important period, when the gristle hardens into bone, when in the female, the child becomes a woman physically—a period that should be one of repose—when nature should gather her powers and plant a firm foot on a basis of solid health, preparatory for the leap into the uncertainties of a future life with its toils and perils. The modern girl sees no such season. The critical period of a girl's life, the installation of a new function of so momentous import, which changes not only her frame, expanding, transforming, and beautifying it, but which also warms the heart

with new life and even mounts to the throne of the intellect, and teaching the eye to see with new light and the ear to hear new sounds, compels the judgment to be swayed by a heretofore unknown attribute, the newborn element of the nature, the capacity for, the desire of, the delight in, maternity.

The establishment of the function of menstruation is little regarded in our present life. The girl not instructed, as she should be by a careful mother, is most frequently surprised, if not much alarmed, by its fearful appearance, and not rarely attempts by various means to conceal its manifestations, and by injudicious actions, appliances and bathings, checks the early onsets, and thereby lays the seeds of persistent troubles in the future.

The subsequent life receives no modification from the presence of this important attribute of womanhood; but prolonged walks, exercises, exposures to the inclemencies of the weather; the exigencies of parties and balls, with the exhausting dances; the stimulation of late suppers, with their highly spiced wines and stimulating food; the unaccustomed garb,

the exposing of a large portion of the person usually kept covered and warm; and, what is perhaps fully as deleterious to the maturing girl, the nervous excitement of the company of the other sex, when nature will assert its claims; of music and fashionable society and the various etceteras—any and all of these produce local, physical derangements, and lay the foundation of life-long disease, debility and sufferings.

The young girl of former days had no such stimulations, either mental, moral or physical. Parties and balls, theatres and public amusements, were generally infrequent, and life was quiet and sedate. And yet in view of all these changes, people wonder that there are more female diseases in the girls and women of the present day than formerly!

The mortality of a city is dependent in no little degree upon the fact, that the people are so crowded together, that even out of doors they are compelled to breathe the air over and over again. The occupants of tenement-houses die in larger proportions than those living in spacious mansions on Murray Hill,

because they have not as large a quantity of fresh air apiece. Some of our public schools have twelve or fifteen hundred pupils confined within their walls for six or eight hours a day, breathing an atmosphere out of which red-hot furnaces have already burnt a large part of its oxygen!

The muscular dances of the present day, the polka, galop, etc., are entered into by young girls, irrespective of their condition. The parent exercises no restraint, and the thoughtless, giddy girl has never been taught any physiological reason for care. She has never been taught that at these periods the internal organs are præternaturally gorged with blood, consequently unusually heavy, that the tissues are lax, that *dresses tight* around the waist must force these expanded organs into abnormal positions and places, and displacements and disease are very likely to be the permanent result.

If I have not, in this very brief allusion to existing conditions of society, made it clear what are the causes of the presence of a larger amount of diseases among the girls of the

time, than was noted a half century or more ago, I certainly have stated some facts which if they do not entirely account for all this great discrepancy, go far to do so. Those who have the care of children and youth, will do well to consider this necessarily imperfect statement. It is foreign to my purpose to dilate upon this matter, and it is only alluded to thus cursorily *en passant*, as a necessary statement, preliminary to entering upon a consideration of the subject, particularly embraced in the plan of this work.

## CHAPTER III.

### AT WHAT AGE SHOULD ONE MARRY?

IT would seem as if health was of rare occurrence among the married women of the present day. Most commonly in large cities, Europe no less than America—and probably the same is true of the more elevated classes of Asia and Africa—general debility, dependent upon local diseases, seems to be the condition of so many, that an uncomplaining woman is rare. This fact is so obvious that no proof seems necessary. Michelet calls this “the age of womb diseases.”\* What is the cause?

The causes commenced in youth, as already sufficiently alluded to in a previous chapter, and continuing into married life, are so infrequent as to form but a small portion of the aggregate number for whose condition we desire to account.

\* L'Amour, *Introduction*, p. 6.

Granting that many enter into the married state debilitated and imperfectly developed by imprudence during their childhood, the principal inciting cause of disease is the fact that too many marry at a too early age.

Here, then, comes the important question, "At what age should one marry?"

Civil laws, in various countries and at various epochs, have been made, fixing the most precocious age at which marriage is allowed; and these have been exceedingly variable, as different ideas have guided legislators. Nubility, with some, has been made identical with puberty, and this latter indefinite period has been legalized by the average age of the appearance of this function in different countries and among different races.

The capacity of generation and reproduction, however, should not be considered as nubility, for "a fitness for marriage and reproduction can only be attained when the powers of procreation have attained their perfection of vigor; when the genital functions can perform their duty without detriment to the health of the individual, and when the character of the

species can be transmitted to the offspring in the fullest and most perfect manner."\* Puberty may, therefore, have existed for a considerable period before this condition is attained. Raisers of stock have noted this grand difference, and recognize the fact that a certain maturity is requisite for a proper propagation of the fullest characteristics of the race and species, as well as the perfect physical development of the individual, who is stunted and retarded in growth by this premature tax upon the vital powers. The Roman law prescribing the age at which marriages should be legal, and looking to the possible cases of early precocity, had fixed that of the female at thirteen and fifteen for the males; Prussia, at fifteen for girls and nineteen for men; France eighteen for men and sixteen for girls; Austria, twenty for men and sixteen for girls. In the United States marriage is allowed at various ages in different States, and these dates are generally very different from those of civil independence.

\* Mayer.

In the warlike nations of antiquity, procreation was considered debilitating, and the athletes and warriors were guarded against every weakening act; and where the great aim was to raise only sturdy children "fit for war's alarms," the weak being either killed at birth or so exposed in youth as either to die or to become hardened, the laws postponed the period of marriage to a very late period. Lycurgus fixed the age at thirty-seven for males and seventeen for females; Plato ordained that of thirty and twenty years respectively; Colon desired it to be thirty-five for men; and at Rome they were, at one time, interdicted from marriage before forty years. Among the Germanic nations a limit was established for the generative act, itself independent of marriage. Girls were not considered nubile till eighteen, and it was deemed disgraceful for a young man to marry before twenty. "In general it may be established that the normal epoch for marriage is the twentieth year for women and the twenty-fourth for men. Usage, however, delays these dates some years. The statistics of Paris for

the 18th century show that the average date of marriage has been twenty-nine for males and twenty-four for females."\*

In this country I think the average date of marriages has heretofore been somewhat earlier, although the tendency at the present time is to retard them to an age somewhat near this period, and too often to postpone them indefinitely. It is reasonable to suppose that for a girl to become a mother and thus to impose upon the constitution the double task of self-development and the formation of a child and its subsequent nursing, must be exhausting, and eventually deteriorating to both. Yet we find many girls, still young, in some of whom the menstrual functions have never been visibly established, becoming mothers, nursing their offspring, and, at the same time, increasing several inches in altitude, and obtaining the development of frame and system usual to this period. I had a patient my-

\* Des Rapports Conjugaux considérées sous le triple point de vue, de la population, de la santé et de la morale publique, par le Doc. Alex. Mayer.—Paris : Ballière et Cie. 1868.

self some twenty years ago who had given birth to five living children, at different times, before she had attained her twenty-first year. Some of the children died, and neither of her or of them, have I had any subsequent knowledge. Apparently she was in the full vigor of health, but yet it is quite possible that her life might have been shortened by such premature tax upon her vigor.

We know that the popular idea is, that women are worn out by the toil and wear connected with the raising of large families, and we can willingly concede something to this statement; but it is certainly far more observable that the efforts at the present day, made to avoid propagation, are ten thousand-fold more disastrous to the health and constitution, to say nothing of the demoralization of mind and heart, which cannot be estimated by red cheeks or physical vigor.

A point incidentally connected with that now under consideration, and being of general interest, as well as of real importance, it may be well to allude to here. This is the relative danger and difficulty attendant upon maternity

at early or late periods of life. Popular opinion, and, indeed, the heretofore generally expressed professional opinions have been, that the woman of advanced age who essays matrimony and the joys of motherhood, does it with great peril to herself as well as to her offspring. As supporting this generally received opinion, we quote the statistical statement of Riecke. He says, "the proportion of cases in which primiparas have called for the assistance of art is one to twenty-eight in the total number of women; while in women who have attained thirty years, the proportion has been one in nine; and while the proportion of deaths after a first confinement has been to the deaths in general as one to sixteen, it was raised to one in nine in the class of primiparas of thirty years of age."\*

Cazeaux, less statistical, but fully as competent authority, says, to the contrary, as follows: "The age of the female has not the injurious relation to the duration of the labor

\* Riecke. *Beiträge zur geburtsülflichen Topographie*, p. 32. Stuttgart: 1827.

which accoucheurs give to it.”\* “There has always been,” says Madame Lachapelle, “upon this point an opinion to which I cannot agree. It is generally believed that the dilatation of the passages is more difficult in persons of advanced age. There is not an accoucheur who has not anxiety for a woman of thirty to thirty-five in a first confinement. There is not a woman of this age who does not look forward with fear to the time of her first labor. Experience has too often proved the falsity of these predictions for me to adopt them. Truly, we often see a slow and painful labor in a woman of advanced age who has never had children; but is it not so with even the youngest? The proportion, I dare say, is perfectly equal. If four in ten primiparas have an easy delivery, four in ten of the oldest will have an equally easy time.”

Mr. Mayer, in commenting upon these opposite sentiments, sides to that of Mr. Riecke, “My own pretty extensive experience places me in the partizanship of Cazeaux and Lachapelle’s opinions. I have never seen more

\* Cazeaux, “*Traité des Accouchements*,” p. 286. 1849.

difficulty in the old than the young woman, and I do not look forward with any more anxiety for the safety of a woman of forty-five than to a girl of fifteen."\* In this opinion, too, we have the support derived from the veterinary art. It is well known that valuable blood-mares of racing stock are kept upon the turf till some accident or advanced age has impaired their powers in this direction, and are withdrawn, then to be, for the first time, employed for stock purposes. The ablest and most experienced raisers testify that the proportion of the difficulties and deaths is not greater in these old mares than in the young fillies.

There is still another inquiry in this direction, viz., the oldest period at which one should marry. But we shall defer its consideration to another portion of this work and in another connection.

\* Mayer, Loc. cit., p. 109. 1868.

## CHAPTER IV.

### IS CONTINENCE PHYSICALLY INJURIOUS?

THE most prolific causes for the injury to the public health of the age, are the methods which have for their aim, the prevention of having children. Mayer has divided these into two forms, which he entitles *preventive and destructive*, and we will follow this division.

The first may be subdivided into three very distinct categories, viz: abstinence from all sexual relations, modifications in the organic condition of the woman, or the use in the generative act of artifices capable of preventing the natural consequences; conjugal onanism, etc.

Marriage is entered into for various reasons. The approach of the sexes is in its purest condition the result of a natural instinct, the end of which is the reproduction of the species. Still, however, we are far from saying that this ultimate result is in any proportion of cases the actual thought in the minds of the parties

engaged. It is rather to be looked upon as an appetite, intended by God to be very imperative in its demands upon our natures.

A principle is announced, and defended by some doctors of divinity, that the laws which preside over the propagation of the human species ought to be understood, and that the intellectual powers should be so applied as to provide means whereby we can prevent the general population of a country from surpassing the limits compatible with the happiness of humanity.

What is deemed the true policy for nations and states, is held to be more exacting still in the case of families and individuals. The man, it is claimed, is in duty bound to limit the number of his children, as well as the sheep on his farm; the number of each to be according to the adequacy of his means for their support.

Malthus has designated one of the effectual means, that of abstinence, as *moral restraint*, a title which a bitter opponent has satirized by calling it *double onanism*.

But if marriage has been entered upon from a supposed necessity, the “moral restraint”

called for is evidently impossible, for what was physically injurious before, becomes doubly aggravating in the constant intercourse of two persons of similar ages and tastes, who are attached by common sympathies and affections.

But the necessity is denied, and many works and treatises have been written on both sides of this question.

Dunoyer, member of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences,\* says, "It is incredible that the act of bringing men into life, that act of humanity, without contradiction of the most consequence, should be the one of which there should have been the least supposed necessity for regulation, or which has been regulated the least beneficially. It is true, there is a religious and civil recognition; but marriage once contracted, the results have been left, so to speak, to the will of God. The only rule prescribed has been either to abstain from all intercourse, or to omit nothing which would render the union fruitful. While the

\* "Memoirs à consulter." Paris, 1835

married pair can think that they perform no empty work, the casuist's morality finds no fault, but if they themselves omit any thing, if either of them commit any abuse, if moreover, they disregard the third, absent and perhaps unlucky party, whom they may call to life without any thought of the lot which awaits him—no matter. The essential point is not that they should avoid an act of triple injury, the important thing is that they should escape a useless act. Such is casuistic morality, in entire opposition to good sense and good morals, for good sense and good morality ask not so much certainly that they should refrain from useless deeds as that they should refrain from wrong-doing.

“So the truth, in spite of these gravely enunciated follies, is, that if the married couple ought not to consider as blamable every approach which was not intended to result in an increase of posterity, they nevertheless, even in the most fully authorized relationships, in the bosom of the most legitimate unions, should care, either for themselves, or one for the other; or it may be both, in relation to

the third, that might be the result of their union!"

To Mr. Mayer the morality of the writer is very lax, and a calumny upon the opinion of Malthus whom he seems not to comprehend. In all cases, with the casuists, he maintains that it is *necessary, either to abstain from all connection, or to omit nothing which might render the relationship fruitful*, and this is the true idea of the phrase, moral restraint. Hereafter it will be seen how utterly we are opposed to all the artifices employed to prevent fecundation.

The object of the present work is to consider not the moral, but the physical aspect of the subject, but Mr. Mayer is so full upon this point of general interest, that I have not hesitated to draw largely from the second chapter of the work already cited.

"The first point that is presented for consideration here is whether absolute continence at an age when the sexual organs are fully developed, and when the man is fit for reproduction, can be the cause of illness. We know that this opinion is held by men of the world,

and that many physicians share it. This belief appears to us to be erroneous, without foundation and easily refuted. It is, moreover, the corner-stone of the edifice which we have undertaken to overthrow, for it is in the name of nature and its indefeasible rights, in the name of morality and the sacred interests which it is its mission to protect, that anathemas will perhaps be fulminated against the doctrines we announce, and that we shall be accused of tyranny and irreligion, unless, indeed, we may be styled utopist, as an excuse for discussing the subject with us. . . . .

“To sustain the statement that moral restraint results in perturbations of the health, it must be admitted that sexual relations are absolutely necessary from the period of puberty itself, and that the venereal necessities should be gratified as soon as they are manifested. It is therefore necessary to condemn our civil laws which permit marriage only on the man’s arriving at eighteen years and the woman at fifteen years. With still more reason, we must protest in the name of science against that religious celibacy which endures through life.

"This is in fact the opinion of a great number of physiologists, who, (relying on the one hand upon the irresistible character of the generative instinct, and on the other upon the physiological necessity of satisfying the want by which it is manifested,) have been led to condemn celibacy in a most absolute manner."

Mr. Mayer claims that no peculiar disease, nor any abridgment of the duration of life, can be ascribed to such continence, and in fact that statistics testify to the contrary, and cites the following figures in support of this view.

"1. During a period of ten years, embracing that between sixteen and twenty-five years inclusive, among the different religious orders of both sexes, who have taken vows of chastity, the mortality has been 2.68 in 100, while it is but 1.48 in 100, among the laity of both sexes engaged in various professions.

"2. During a period of ten years, from thirty-one to forty inclusive, the mortality was 4.40 in 100 of the religious, and 2.74 in 100 of the laity.

"These tables conform to those of Deparcieux, whose tables were published in 1746,

and go to show the ill results from continency, if the dumb testimony of figures is called for, but nothing can be more uncertain than such conclusions.

“We will now show why these statistics should be discredited.

“First, to be able to sustain with certainty the alleged action of continence on the health of many, the cause should be isolated from every other cause which attends the chances of longevity at these given periods of life. So it cannot be rigorously exact to reason from the figures cited, and to say continence is far from being injurious to health ; on the contrary, it is favorable, since fewer individuals die at an age when the sexual relations do not frequently occur, although the genital sense may be already developed, than at the period when, on the contrary, the sexual relations take place without hindrance.

“This reasoning would also be faulty, inasmuch as it takes no count of the peculiar morbid predispositions of each age.

“One would be deceived also if he considered he had obtained a *criterion* for the solu-

tion of the problem in question, by considering, as we have done, the mean of the mortality among the religious on the one hand, and the laity on the other, at the two fixed periods of life. In fact, to announce that continence causes a greater mortality, based upon the statistics of religious corporations, it should be assumed that the rules of chastity are not infringed upon, which we dare not guarantee, especially at those periods concerning which these tables were made, that is the middle of the eighteenth century.

“Further, the influence of the habits and discipline of cloister life upon its duration should be taken into account, which would greatly alter the result obtained.

“It is easily seen that the points of comparison fail in identity, and cannot but lead to fictitious results. This is why we appeal rather to the general experience to corroborate our own and to verify what we have said relative to the viciousness of continence at any period of life.

“It is determined in our opinion that the commerce of the sexes has no necessities that

cannot be restrained without peril, and the very lively solicitations which spring from the genital sense, have no other end than to insure the perpetuity of the race by the attraction of pleasure.

“A part has been assigned to *spermatic plethora* in the etiology of various mental affections. Among others, priapism has been attributed to it. In our opinion, this malady originates in a disturbance of the cerebral nerve power; but it is due much less to the retention of sperm than to its exaggerated loss; much less to virtuous abstinence than to moral depravity.

“A work has appeared upon the subject, now under consideration, an examination of which is appropriate here.\* The author makes the query: “God has made the regular performance of the organic functions the condition of life and health—has He wished that disease or death should be the punishment of infring-

\* Examen de l’ouvrage publié par M. le docteur Dufieux, sous ce titre *Nature et Virginité, considerations physiologiques sur le celibat religieux* par M. le Dr. Diday. (V. Gazette Medicale de Paris, 1854.)

ing this precept, by preserving an absolute continence?

“ ‘No,’ says M. Duffieux; and he bases his answer upon two distinct considerations, one rational, one experimental. He, in the first place makes it appear that the accumulation in the organism of the material of generation, never constitutes a danger, because nature knows how to get rid of it herself. In the second place, he claims that the diseases attributed to continence by some authors, proceed from other causes.

“ These are also our views, as may be seen by what has preceded; but we do not entirely agree with M. Duffieux in his explanations, but on the contrary, are of the opinion of the learned physician of Lyons, M. Diday. In fact, on this point the author starts with a very specious argument, which demands our attention.

“ ‘Menstruation,’ he says, ‘is a means instituted by Providence to maintain the equilibrium of the economy, by eliminating the materials of generation, when they are not employed by nature, and thus to prevent the ills

that might arise, either from the afflux of blood toward the genitals of the woman, or from superabundance in the entire organism. Virginity may then invoke this phenomenon in its favor, and it can then be considered as an authorization of celibacy, given by nature itself, for it testifies that virginity cannot be injurious to the health, for the very simple reason that menstruation disembarrasses the economy of the generative material, and prevents the plethoric trouble which continence might give rise to.'

"If any embarrassment is felt from the aspect of this proposition, it is because it expresses a very exact fact, the application of which is erroneous. It is positive, that at each cateminal epoch, the ripe ovules are spontaneously evacuated; but has not nature in thus expelling them, desired to put them in conditions favorable for fecundation, or has it simply desired to get rid of them? The truth is the more difficult to penetrate, as the plethoric accidents, in fact, spring very certainly from the suppression, retarding or insufficiency of the courses.

“ But under the vague name of *plethora*, the author, as may be easily seen, has confounded the superabundance of the generative material—the ovules—with the congestion resulting from the retention of blood, which flows spontaneously at each ovulation. Take from this thesis the support of this equivocation, and it crumbles immediately. For if menstruation should fail, there will be amassed in the economy an excess of genesaic material, from which various consequences should proceed ; while unfortunately for the thesis of M. Dufieux, every day’s observation presents us with facts to confute it.

“ Thus, a woman menstruating imperfectly, ought to be fecundated more easily, since she retains, so to speak, ovules in reserve. But the contrary is one of the unfortunate truths of practical medicine. Two girls menstruate at fourteen or fifteen years of age, one continues to menstruate regularly ; the other, after some normal returns, finds the flow stopped at eighteen years of age. What an amount of heat must excite the genital instincts, stimulated by retention for four years of these ele-

ments, according to Duffieux, so threatening to continence! Well, observation shows, that if in fact she is subject to these various congestions, passion most generally slumbers as quietly with her as with her well-regulated companion.

“Furthermore,—and we now return to the study of the normal condition—if the menstrual evacuation was instituted to facilitate continence, after each epoch, the warmth of the desires would be essentially deadened, and would fall to their *minimum*. But exactly the contrary fact is noted. And if Mr. Duffieux, pre-occupied by ideas of another character, has been badly situated to observe the fact, we, as well as all those who have directed their attention to the point, can assure him that the genital appetite has its paroxysms at this period; that some women, who are generally unaccustomed to such impressions, never perceive these sensations which astonish them, except immediately after the menstrual tribute.

“Is it worth while to prove still further the hypothesis? Can it be that nature, in the regular return of this phenomenon, has no

other end in view than like a new Penelope, to destroy in three days the work of an entire month! Do you call by the name of excrement, the pollen floating in the air, this weighty letter that nature knows how to carry it to its address! Do you designate as a vile discharge the multitude of eggs the female fish spread out upon the sands! You can see nothing but a precaution providentially ordered to facilitate continence. As we have chanced to note that the male does not long delay to follow in her track, we must suspect that it was for some other purpose than that of furnishing an argument.

“ For the masculine sex the question is not doubtful. ‘ But I must own,’ says M. Diday, ‘ that it is with a sort of pain that the other elevates to the rank of a natural function, those seminal losses which are the shame and disgust of every man, of which he reproaches himself, even if involuntary, and which always leaves behind a profound and lasting feeling of sadness. Compare the moral condition with the past joy, the instinctive pride which, in spite of the gentle melancholy of the first mo-

ments, follows the free and entire possession of the beloved object, and say if after, as before, nature has not sufficiently designated, what pleases it and what violates it.'

"You have fully expressed, M. Diday, and with a poetry peculiar to yourself, that which especially makes the delectation of the genital act, normally consummated,—*'the pride at the free and entire possession of the beloved one.'* That which constitutes the sadness and shame of the nocturnal pollution, is awaking to the deception. Assuredly, the heart is not satisfied to see the exciting dream vanish away, full of charms, which just now held him breathless in its empire; but the organism is no less exonerated from a painful course of stimulation, and calm reigns where the storms roared and order is re-established. That the desires of nature should be satisfied, and that the material and unclean excretion should take place, as an ordinary rule, from the pleasures of pure love, the legitimate aim of which is procreation, none will dare to deny. Certain it is that we will never sustain any opposing sacrilegious view.

“Starting from the erroneous principle which we have combated, many physicians prescribe coition as a method of treatment. In our opinion there is danger in this. Doubtless the man of art should only occupy himself with the cure of his patients. He has no sacrifices of theory to consider. But we deny most absolutely that he should ever permit himself to go contrary to the general laws of morality upon which society is founded, even were it to snatch a patient from death.

“Fortunately the antagonism between the laws of nature and of mortality is only imaginary, and the physician is rarely called upon to do violence to his feelings or to fail in his duty.

“Whatever price a man may attach to a thing so precious as health, it is not permitted for a physician to assure him its pleasures by recourse to means which morality condemns. That principle which commands man to renounce life rather than violate the laws of duty, still more imperatively orders the physician not to yield his science to the service of bad passions . . . yielding only to the impulse of

his instinct, perhaps the individual might stop on the edge of the precipice, but strengthened by the advice of the physician who guides him in the wrong direction, he will pursue it to the bitter end ; passion seeks but pretexts to silence the bitter reproaches of conscience. Where can he find them easier than in the advice of a physician who makes the seductions of pleasure a therapeutical mean ? It is something worse than vice to the man, it is an anæsthetic which prevents him from feeling the stings of remorse.' \*

" The forced continence of woman is claimed to result in nymphomania, hysteria and certain forms of chlorosis, etc. Mr. Briquet does not share this opinion.

" ' From the most remote periods,' says he, ' philosophy and medicine have regarded continence as the principal and even the only cause of hysteria.' If we did not know to what point prejudices are powerful to fascinate even the most elevated minds, we should with difficulty comprehend how such an error had birth, how it could pass from age to age as

\* Max Simon, *Déontologie Medicale*, p. 288.

current coin, and preserve itself intact to our days and should be astonished that we find it now actually necessary to combat an opinion which has no real basis, and which has never been submitted to a truthful test.'\*

"We must go back even to Plato, to find the origin of the belief, in virtue of which, 'the womb of woman is an animal which has an intense desire to conceive, and which is a fury if it does not conceive.' Hippocrates and Galen repeat this same error, based upon the presumed existence of a seminal fluid in woman. Valescus (de Tarente), Forestus and many nearer our day, Fernal Rivière, Hoffmann and many others, attribute hysteria to the repletion of these seminal vessels, which they admit on the authority of the masters. In vain did observation show then that infants and old women were alike subject to this neurosis; they preferred, rather than renounce traditional theory, to invent new hypotheses to conform the exceptional facts to the doctrine which recognizes feminine sperm.

\* Briquet, *Traité clinique et thérapeutique de l'hystérie.*  
p. 126. Paris, 1859.

"But see how a mixed theory between the ancient and the modern ideas sprung up toward the close of the eighteenth century. It belongs to Chambon, one of the last of the humorists. 'The womb,' he assures us, 'contains within its walls sinuses, through which filter a mucous excremental fluid, which is easily changed, and which, by this means, becomes irritant. It appears that this humor, in its greatest purity, has an odor and savor sufficiently marked. It is a very active stimulant, and excites the womb, the more powerfully as this humor is more abundant and less evacuated by the pleasure of love; then it gorges the vessels that secrete it, which establishes a sort of plethora, whose effects trouble the uterus and provoke hysterical crises.'\*

"Finally, when the anatomy of the ovaries was better known, physicians, with unanimity, rejected the belief of a seminal fluid in woman, and recognized as a cause of hysteria, some a super-excitation of the uterus and its annexes, and others dynamic or organic lesions

\* *Encyclopædia Méthodique. Dict. de Med. Art. Hysterie. 1798.*

secreted entirely outside of the genital apparatus. After that, it would seem as if continence would no longer figure as a cause of hysteria. Well, it is not so; and this opinion is far from being fully sustained by those who still maintain it, so I will cite H. Landousy of Rheims.

“The partizans of the injurious consequences of continence, all very justly select, as examples for demonstration, widows, who, after having tasted the delights of love, are suddenly and violently deprived of them. In three hundred and seventy-five cases of hysteria which Landousy has given from other authors, or has observed himself, thirteen cases are found in widows. In four hundred and thirty cases observed by M. Briquet, fourteen only were found in widows—a total of one widow in thirty cases of hysteria. It will be conceded that this is small, and that this already small proportion would be further diminished if we should seek carefully for causes aside from widowhood, which, in some of these women, might have brought on the hysterical attack; as chagrin at the loss of a

husband, the misery in which the loss might have plunged them, and many like causes, sufficient to account for the invasion of an essentially nervous disease. Finally, it must be determined if these hysterical widows were not so anteriorly to the death of their husbands and even before their marriage. These, however, are no longer uncertainties but truths, about the demonstration of which a long discussion has sprung up, into which M. Briquet has entered to prove :

“ 1. ‘ That widows are exposed to hysteria no more than other women ; that with them this condition results rather from the moral affections to which they are subject than to anything else.

“ 2. ‘ That this disease is no more common in those whose condition is one of continence than in others ; that it can, on the contrary, be very frequent among those who are at all continent.’ ” \*

“ According to Burdach,† entire abstinence

\* Briquet. Work quoted, p. 141.

† Burdach. *Traité de physiologie*.

from sensual pleasures does more injury to the entire female organism than to that of men, and unmarried women are frequently attacked by disturbances of the courses, chlorosis and leucorrhœa; they have a great propensity to melancholy and are subject to attacks of various grave maladies; but, adds this celebrated physiologist, their health is preserved, when their thoughts are occupied and when they are gratified with a sphere of action in harmony with their faculties.

“ In such circumstances, many physicians order marriage as they prescribe the most simple medicine. We do not mean to find fault with their intention, it is assuredly good, and further, it springs from ideas current in science for ages, which no one has ventured to investigate. Here at least, good morals are regarded, and few of our brothers perceive the responsibility which they assume in proposing unions *secundum artem*. It is, however, only necessary to inspire them with a greater reserve to make them comprehend :

“ 1st. That an unseasonable or premature marriage relatively to the social economy, is a

cause of disorder, misery and despair which increases without cessation, and multiplies as the new family increases.

“ 2nd. That in the great majority of cases, either marriage does not fulfil the proposed indications, or it is not the only curative means to which recourse might have been had.

“ The first of these two propositions appears to be sufficiently demonstrated by what we have already said. As to the second, it remains for us to prove, and to that we now apply ourselves.

“ It is a question which has already been often agitated, whether in certain circumstances marriage can be recommended to woman as a curative means.

“ A physician of Berlin, Doctor Caspers, furnishes for this purpose a method of observation which may be of use for men of the medical art.\*

“ ‘ How often do we hear,’ he cries, ‘ from

\* De l'influence du mariage sur la durée de la vie humaine (annales d'hygiène publique et de med. legale,) 1st Serie I. xiv, p. 237.

physicians or from those not of the healing art, that a young woman, or young widow, a prey to nervous disease, has no other cure to expect except from marriage, that is to say, from the constant and regulated satisfaction of the instincts of generation, and how often have we also lost our seriousness in hearing repeated the phrase of Mephistopheles. *Ce n'est que par un point qu' on peut guérir leurs éternels soupirs.'"*

"But is the opinion founded upon experience? In truth, every physician may have seen cases where hysterical spasms have disappeared in woman as an effect of marriage; but it is also as true, that not one can be found who has not sometimes seen this means not only useless but injurious, of which we have found convincing proofs in a great number of well observed cases. We are far from pretending, however, that these facts can suffice to entirely resolve the question which we now enter upon, for the first time, from this point of view. It is only impossible not to admit, as everything indicates, that marriage, resulting in the satisfaction of venereal desires, exerts a favorable

influence upon the health of women and serves to prolong their lives. How otherwise can we explain the notable difference of mortality which exists between married and unmarried women, during the time when they ordinarily become mothers, say between 20 and 45, a difference which from late statistics amounts to 29 per cent. in favor of marriage? This difference of mortality seems to us to be so considerable, that all the physiological reasons which we have enumerated do not suffice to explain it. It is more rational to consider at the same time the position occupied by married women, who find a more assured position in society of sweet interior satisfaction, and are forced to exert an activity favorable to health, while the women remaining in celibacy generally live in less ease, especially to-day, when interest is the moving principle, and when the want of money prevents so many from finding husbands. Annoyed by the consciousness that they are retained in an inferior position, and lead a life without an object, the girls waste in chagrin, and in the lower classes, abandon themselves to libertinage and expose them-

selves to all the evils that might result to their honor or their health.

“ As for man, in his ordinary state, and when he has arrived at the age of puberty, the secretion of sperm takes place more or less abundantly, according to his temperament in the first place, and then according to his habitual occupation. The brain, in fact, possesses a very powerful influence upon the functional activity of the testicles, and the salacity depends often more upon the want of mental occupation than on the fullness of the pocket. In consequence, he who encourages lubricity, who pleases himself by the contemplation of images capable of exciting the genital sense, will secrete the seminal liquid in greater quantities.

“ On the contrary, he whose mind is turned toward serious matters, who, for example, concentrates his intellectual faculties upon abstract studies, will, in a given period, furnish a much less quantity of sperm than the former. The latter will be free also from all suggestions from his genital organs, while the former will be besieged, tyrannized by them.

“In the former case, nature will excite nocturnal and even diurnal pollutions, which are causes of rapid decay.

“In the latter case, the rare nocturnal pollutions, as the result of a too full condition of the *vesicules seminales*, will be followed by a good state of general health, and a remarkable clearness of mind.

“These nocturnal emissions are, as is well known, a means by which the organism clears itself of superfluous material and maintains itself in freedom. It is not a disease till it becomes immoderate.

“At the outset, the sexual necessities are not so uncontrolled as is generally supposed, and they can be put down by the intervention of a little energetic will. There is, therefore, as it appears to us, as much injustice in accusing nature of disorders which are dependent upon the genital senses, badly directed, as there would be in attributing to it a sprain or a fracture, accidentally produced.

“It is only exceptionally, that we remark in the human species—in individuals in whom a morbid state has so exalted the sexual instinct

that continence creates in man—redness, tumefaction, pains in the scrotum, continual erections and a painful tension in the spermatic cord and the vesicules seminales, without considering those of an especial lively imagination in whom the most extraordinary novel phenomenon, and finally the rage of satyriasis may be produced. So Burdach reports of a young ecclesiastic, a rigid observer of his vows, whose ascetic studies had finished by disturbing his intellect, that he fell into melancholy, abhorring both mankind and himself, and that he was more than once seized with attacks of frenzy ; after having an intermission of his nocturnal pollutions, he had visions of women surrounded by an electric aurcola ; soon he imagined himself possessed with a devil, believed himself to be Achilles, Alexander, Henry IV., and did not recover his health until after the accomplishment of the venereal act.

“ We have quoted this instance to show that in certain exceedingly rare cases, it is necessary to do violence to the precepts laid down, but we cannot insist too much upon the circumstance, as the observations of the sort

which we have recounted are habitually due to a veritable morbid state, which it is necessary to combat by all possible means, before prescribing coitus.

"We repeat for woman what we have already said for man. With her there is no peculiar secretion, the retention of which may become a cause of disease, but a vital organism, which at the epoch of puberty reveals to her a new sense. If, then, she abandons herself to voluptuous reveries, and feeds her imagination with reading in harmony with the direction of these ideas, especially if vicious habits add their excitements of the genital apparatus to the solicitations which the brain has already sent thither, it is very much to be feared that the sexual approach will become an imperious necessity ; and one will run great risk—by seeking, under such circumstances, to restrain this need—of seeing the disorders arise of which we have previously spoken. For it is still more common with women than with men, to see melancholy and fury come on under the influence of these violent unsatisfied desires.

“Esquirol,\* among others, reports the history of a girl of nineteen affected with hysterical spasms, who fled from her father’s house, lived for ten months as a public woman, had two miscarriages during the period, and finally returned to her parents. Being afterwards married, she lived becomingly. But once again, should we seriously make nature responsible for evils which it is possible, in conformity with the teachings of morality, by regular habits to prevent; that morality which is not a science, but whose precepts are written in the depths of every conscience, and the proof of which is the remorse which follows every bad action? No, we cannot impute to nature the unhappy results of continence, any more than the indigestion of the glutton, who unreasonably overloads his stomach.

“The methods by which man, considered in both sexes, can diminish his venereal needs, consist in the diversion which he gives to his fancies, by devoting himself to manual labor or the culture of the sciences—in the privation which he imposes upon himself—when his

\* Esquirol, *Des maladies mentales.* 1838.

sensual exigencies are especially pressing—in all that would tend to increase the tone of his organs or the excitability of the nervous system, as animal food, condiments, alcoholic drinks, coffee, etc. Sleep on the back is to be avoided; long rest in bed, especially a bed too soft. Finally, the use of tepid baths, and cooling drinks of all sorts, will, as adjuvants, be found of unquestionable utility.

“A medical casuist, well known by his scientific works (Debreyne),\* proposes the following means as opposed to dishonest thoughts :

“‘If thoughts of this kind, becoming too importunate, are the product of a light and unsettled imagination, when certain souvenirs livingly retrace themselves in the memory, we should endeavor to divert the mind by forcing the thoughts into some intellectual, serious labor, requiring application, or by a difficult and complicated calculation requiring all the attention, etc.† If the bad thoughts proceed

\* Mœchialogue, *Traité des Péches contre les Sixième et Neuvième Commandements du Decalogue*, p. 160.

† We should adopt these means with circumspection, for we often note that too severe mental contentions bring on pollution.

from an erotic temperament or a spermatic plethora, the best methods will be those taken from general, physical and moral hygiene; the practice of temperance, or exact sobriety, manual labor, corporal exercise, an incessant material or mechanical occupation, fatigue, sometimes even the chase, which, in certain cases, produce the best and even the most astonishing results. Diana, as we know, is the natural born enemy of Venus. Violent exercise destroys the erotic sentiment, by giving birth to sentiments still more imperious, as excessive hunger and an irresistible propensity to physical repose.”

“ We have now to ask ourselves if chastity, this so much-vaunted virtue in celibacy, preserves its character and its rights in marriage, where it receives the name of moral restraint; and what is to be thought of the wide-spread opinion which, in this case, in a religious point of view, condemns it as a fault.

“ We are not able to enter into any discussion upon this point; but we consider ourselves instructed upon this subject from ministers of various sects, whose unanimous

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opinion is that morality, which is the same in all religions, demands that man should only bring into the world beings that can be happy—physically capable of enjoying life and health.

## CHAPTER V.

### PERSONAL POLLUTION.

I APPROACH this topic with great hesitation. It is a subject seemingly for personal converse rather than consideration in print. But my reluctance is diminished, yea, I am rather emboldened to point out the secret cause of much that is perverting the energies and demoralizing the minds of many of our fairest and best, by recognizing the immense good that has been done to the male youth of this country by the kind and forcible statements of Rev. Dr. Todd in his *Students' Manual*. This work has done an incalculable good in moulding the minds of America's youth; and, more especially, his warning chapter upon *Onanism*. As a boy, I knew it, for it was the frequent subject of discussion among my academic and collegiate associates. Although the propriety of its publication was doubted by many, the result has proven that the earnestly-

sought decision was eminently sound, and thousands now live to thank this conscientious teacher for the first information they received of the ills arising from a habit more pernicious to the intellectual man, (setting aside the physical disabilities resulting therefrom,) than any other habit to which he is usually addicted. Tobacco and alcohol are not so potent to rob man of all the high prerogatives of manhood, as this humiliating, self-abasing vice.

Far less common, indeed, is it among females than among the male youth of this country ; perhaps, too, less disastrous in its results to the mental and physical economy ; yet much of the worthlessness, lassitude and physical and mental feebleness attributable to the modern woman are to be ascribed to these habits as their initial cause. The natural nervous character of females is heightened and intensified, and local congestions and weakening discharges are the direct result of the exciting erethisms so thoughtlessly employed.

Perhaps I have, in these vague allusions, said enough to excite the thought and minds

of parents, more especially of those in charge of large seminaries of learning, and such-like green-houses, where, with the seeds of learning and wisdom, some of the tares are sown, which are propagated with terrific rapidity when once introduced.

Mayer and Auber draw recognizable pictures, which are worthy of notice in this connection :

“ In the most elevated regions of the social hierarchy woman becomes a curious study, because she becomes an artificial creation—a sort of variety of species. Idleness, which softens the unnatural world in which she moves ; the habit which she adopts of turning day into night ; seclusion in apartments, where the air is saturated with perfumes, and whither comes but rarely the sun-light of heaven ; the custom of not going out of doors save in carriages hermetically closed ; all these causes come to the same result—the impoverishing of the blood and the predominance of the nervous system.

“ From this morbid super-excitability there is but one step, and this once taken we are

confronted by a well-marked disease, which is often beyond all medicine—a protean-formed neuropathy or nerve-ism.”\*

The unfortunate affected with this nervous super-excitation, and in whom the least impression is redoubled like the sound of a *tam-tam*, seeks for emotions still more violent and more varied. It is this necessity, which nothing can appease, which took the Roman women to the spectacles where men were devoured by ferocious beasts, and which now actually attracts them to bull-fights and capital executions. It is the emptiness of an unquiet and sombre soul seeking some activity, which clings to the slightest incident of life, to elicit from it some emotion which forever escapes; in short, it is the deception and disgust of existence.

M. Ed. Auber† thus paints the physique of these women whose morale we have given:

“These nervous women are pale, wan and

\* See Bouchut’s work, “De l’état nerveux aigu et chronique, ou névrose, appelé neuropathique aiguë céphalo-pneumo-gastrique.” Paris: 1890.

† M. Ed. Auber. “Hygiène des femmes nerveuses.”

languishing; the skin is dry and cold or burning; the eye is cast down or haggard, timid or caressing; the complexion cloudy; the physiognomy languishingly expressive and very mobile. It is rare that they have not some peculiar traits; their walk is sometimes nonchalant, sometimes quick, dashing, precipitate; they speak of everything with warmth, with enthusiasm, and even with a kind of exaltation, with them akin to exaggeration of sentiment, which at times gives them an air of real inspiration."

Such is the sad state of health which modern civilization has created for the greater number of the "women of the world" by the incense offered to them and turning them from their proper direction.

A veritable plague is to-day scourging the society of France, spreading ruin in its families. It is, to use a consecrated expression, "the unbridled luxury of women."

If M. Mayer can say this of industrious France, what shall we say of the modern lady of this country?

The sensuous intemperance is sufficiently to

be reprobated when its aliment is drawn from vigor of physical energy, the heightened imagination, the mind pampered by the ordinary stimulation of the æsthetic as delineated in marble, spread out on the glowing canvas, where the great artist Guido portrays Io, with rapturous eye upturned, as if to meet half way the king of the gods; or by the perusal of the lubricious writings of the day, whose foul impurity is too often gilded by genius—or by the public exposure of the cheap charms of the modern meretricious stage. But when even these coarse excitants for depraved minds—dead to all ordinary sensations—when these fail and recourse is had to super-stimulation of a more gross, mediate and materialistic character, when nature is set aside and imaginative bestialities are foully substituted—when woman degrades the nuptial couch by copying the foulness of the bagnio—then farewell to female purity, to virtue, to any thing worthy!

Mayer has not spoken too strongly when he says, "In fact, is it not true that the public manners owe a great part of their degradation,

and families their disorder, to the scandalous scenes of the alcove, often transformed into an actual brothel? The immorality of the husband teaches the young spouse the ingenious stratagems invented by debauch. Revolting at first in her modesty, till then respected—secretly warned by her conscience of the outrage to morality, of which she is made the innocent accomplice—the woman will remember, if ever virtue succumbs, the lessons which she has received, for deceiving nature and assuring herself impunity while odiously violating her conjugal faith, the palladium of the family. Whose is the fault? if not his who has not known how to preserve most preciously in his companion, chastity, that safeguard which God has placed in the heart of woman to preserve her feebleness, and to warn her of danger; for the woman who no longer blushes is delivered without defence to the suggestions of vice; and if then the honor of her husband remains safe, it is because circumstances rather than his sagacity has protected it."

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE INJURIOUS RESULTS OF PHYSICAL EXCESS.

IN the order of sequence, the first deviation from the laws of life and health after the premature marriages already alluded to, is that of excess in the genesaic act. In fact, permanent and often serious disease dates from the excessive energy of the first connections. Brutality would be the proper term to apply, did not this carry with it an idea of intended injury, far from being present in the mind of the principal individual concerned. Indeed, very often the natural tendencies of disposition and repugnance at giving pain are overruled by ideas of duty, of vindicating one's manhood, and a supposed necessity of overcoming every obstacle and effecting an entire consummation of the marriage rites, the object of so much hope, so full of results in the future,

so promising in present happiness. Patience and temperance are virtues that need never be lost sight of in any relation of life, and this recognition in the circumstance which we are now considering is especially to be noted. So serious was the hæmorrhage resulting from these forcible lacerations in one case that came to my knowledge, that the services of several of the most eminent surgeons of this city were requisite, and the life of the blooming bride was for several days most seriously jeopardized.

It would scarcely seem necessary to counsel husbands to be guided somewhat by reason instead of yielding themselves entirely to the control of their passions. And yet such advice is requisite, and to none more so than to those who have been always distinguished for their correctness of conduct. Indeed, those who during early manhood have not been strict Josephs in their morality, whose passions have been somewhat calmed by indulgence, are usually less rash and extravagant in their demands. But he who has been hitherto restrained by his fears, or by high religious prin-

clebration from sexual indulgence, often thinks that now he is free morally and religiously to gratify his natural desires to their utmost, and forgets the limitations of the physical nature. Excess in lawful desire is subject to the same corporeal laws as in unlawful, and its penalty is disease and debility. I have seen no more marked instances of physical and nervous debility and disorganization than I have noted in young clergymen and in their virtuous wives. These imaginative men, of highly nervous temperaments, thoughtlessly anticipate a repayment for all past restraints, in unlimited physical gratification, forgetting that under no circumstances can the body be left without the guidance of the intellect.

Dr. Todd makes a suggestive corroboration of this statement. "You sometimes hear people laugh at the large families of clergymen. You see the reason why they are large. They have too much conscience to violate the known laws of God." \*

With the husband, rest and the usual treatment of exhaustion, result usually in over-

\* John Todd, D.D. *Serpents in the Dove's Nest.*

coming the temporary consequences of such excess; but in the female, not unfrequently more permanent disorganizations have been effected. The integrity of her more delicate apparatus has been marred. The consequence is uterine weakness with its whole train of nervous sympathies, and these too, perhaps, early aggravated by the irritable womb prematurely expelling its immature contents.

The same laws hold good here that are recognised in every other action of life. The pedestrian undertaking a journey is moderate in the walk of the first days. The wood-chopper in the forest, as well as the girl who sweeps the parlor, finds the instrument blisters the unaccustomed hand, and works gently till time has gradually hardened the palm for the occupation.

And some of my readers will recognise this simple truth, and wonder that they had not thought of it before.

But even when the physical ills, incident to early matrimonial life, are passed by, the more serious nervous prostrations, the direct result of excess in cohabitation may still be present.

But it may be said that the demands of nature are, in the married state, not only legal, but should be physically right. So they are when our physical life is right ; but it must not be forgotten that few live in a truly physical rectitude. We are living in a hot-house, where our nervous energies are developed at the expense of our physique. Life in a city, with its imperfect aeration, where the air that we breathe has been breathed before, and thus deprived of its proper oxygen, where we live in the shadow of great houses and behind curtains deprived of the revivifying influences of the sunbeam, the great source of life and energy, where we have the exercise of but parts of our frame, where our food is stimulating and our daily life exciting, where we read little from the calm book of nature, but much from the sensuous and feverish one-sided portrayals of dramatic painters of love and passion—this life is not nature, nor are the mad feelings which possess us nature either. The lustful cravings of our pampered selves is no more nature, than is the call for brandy a natural appetite !

Lallemand\* says "vanity is perhaps the most common cause of venereal excesses. Man covets the esteem of his race, and especially that of women, of whom he is the natural protector. It is when in the presence of woman that he is proud of his intellectual and physical superiority, and of his social position; but it is of his virile power of which he is especially proud and which he endeavors to prove; those who are least strong in this respect, most fear to allow their weakness to appear. Hence excesses arise, which are not caused by real necessities and which do not spring from a violent passion. Young men who, soon after their marriage, had given themselves up to the ardor of their passion, endeavor to sustain the excesses with which they commenced, they dread causing a suspicion of coolness, or of infidelity, though they very soon repent their first imprudence, their irritated organs being no longer in the physiological condition which at first permitted

\* M. LALLEMAND. A practical treatise on the causes, symptoms and treatment of Spermatorrhœa. Philadelphia, 1853.

them to support such excesses. If I may judge from the facts I have learned from my patients, their venereal excesses have been caused more frequently by unfortunate vanity than by ardent attachments. . . . The sensations are more lively in proportion as the semen is better formed and has remained (within certain limits) longer in its reservoirs ; the excitement caused by its continued presence may even proceed so far as to bring on a state of erotic fury, almost resembling mania. . . . The diminution of pleasure, is therefore, the first sign that the individual has exceeded the limits of his real wants.

To the man there is the limitation of a physical capability which no stimulants from within or without can goad to further excess. The erethism of the woman has no boundary. The unnatural irritation sometimes cannot be appeased, and these manifestations of disease may proceed from the complicity of simple nervous local irritation with some general sympathies, until it reaches the grand ganglion and the throne of reason itself trembles and is shattered.”

Hysteria, regarding which Mayer and others have spoken so fully, disproving the idea of its being caused by continence, is unquestionably the result, in my opinion, of uterine irritation, be it produced as it may. More often is it found as the result of excess in venery than as connected with its entire absence.

A quaint writer\* of considerable force when he is not riding a hobby, says in a chapter on "Exhaustion of Vital Power or Debility caused by Excessive Seminal Indulgence:" "The records of the profession are loaded down with the history of cases of men and women who have brought upon themselves severe and destructive diseases by means of excessive sexual indulgence, and who have transmitted these diseases to their children in the form of constitutions or habits of body predisposing them to take on, from their very earliest stages of childhood, chronic or organic diseases. . . .

"The causes of all this must be, that in the

\* Consumption. How to prevent it, and how to cure it. James. C. Jackson, M.D. Boston, H. L. Emerson, 1862.

father, at the time of begetment of these children, the germs of his own life must be very much weakened, while excessive sexual indulgence on the part of the mother impairs her nutrient abilities," etc.

Louis XII. of France died in 1514, three months after marrying a second wife, much younger than himself, and his death was attributed to this change in his habits of life.

As opportunity is often the origin of sin, propinquity, in these cases, is very frequently the cause of excess. If the European custom, occasionally adopted in this country, of sleeping in single beds, were more generally in vogue, the necessity of this chapter would be much lessened.

#### What is Excess ?

Excess is too much. Too much for one may not be enough for another. A marriage may have been physically improper. It was, perhaps, a *marriage de convenance*. We cannot regulate this, but we do know that excess is premature death !

## CHAPTER VII.

### METHODS USED TO PREVENT CONCEPTION, AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES.

EXCESS, however, is of rare occurrence compared with some other habits of modern matrimonial unions. Excess is a product of leisure and ease, which is an infrequent element in American life. There are few whose minds are sufficiently freed from the cares and anxieties of life, from the necessity of earning a livelihood, with the consequent employment of time and the fatigues of body and brain. The physical energies are too completely used up by these necessities to allow for much excess in pleasure, save at such infrequent intervals as to be comparatively harmless.

The means used for preventing conception, more particularly affecting women, together with the more bodily injurious, more nervously exhausting and more sinfully demoral-

izing procedures, for the purpose of destroying and making away with the results of conception—these are the crying evils of the age and of the world.

We quote again from Mayer, who treats very fully on this too frequent sin: “The numerous stratagems invented by debauch to annihilate the natural consequences of coition have all the same end in view. It is not expected that we shall give a description of all the methods employed to accomplish this purpose. It would but soil our pen, without any advantage to the science that we aim to serve. All that we have in view is to mark these grave infractions against the laws of nature, which cannot be violated with impunity. When one reflects for an instant, it will be seen that the grand functions upon which the life of the individual depends, are placed under the empire of the instinct, which watches without relaxation for their accomplishment. So, in the same manner, nutrition demands alimentation. When we attempt to deceive hunger, a sensation is aroused, so disagreeable, that it is capable of awaking even

the most apathetic, if indolence could allow such an one to neglect the care of his own preservation. When one fills the stomach with non-edible substances, there results atrophy, the loss of strength, and finally death. Is it permitted us to think—when the reproduction of the species is concerned, a function for which nature has reserved its most varied resources, throughout the whole range of being—that man can with impunity disturb the laws which rule the universe, by substituting his industry for the magnificent combinations by which all is maintained and produced?

“We reply, *a priori*, this cannot be ; and observation fully confirms the views of inductive philosophy ; for it proves to us that coitus, exercised otherwise than under the inspirations of honest instinct, is a cause of disease in both sexes, and of danger to the social order.

“The soiling of the conjugal bed by the shameful manœuvres to which we have made allusion, is mentioned for the first time in Genesis xxxviii. 6 and following verses : ‘And

it came to pass when he (Onan) went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground lest that he should give seed to his brother. And the thing which he did displeased the Lord; wherefore he slew him.'

"Hence the name of *conjugal onanism*.

"One cannot tell to what great extent this vice is practiced except by observing its consequences, even among people who fear to commit the slightest sin, to such a degree is the public conscience perverted upon this point. Still many husbands know that nature often succeeds in rendering nugatory the most subtle calculations, and reconquers the rights which they have striven to frustrate. No matter; they persevere none the less, and by the force of habit they poison the most blissful moments of life, with no surety of averting the result that they fear. So, who knows if the infants, too often feeble and weazened, are not the fruit of these incomplete *procreations*, and disturbed by pre-occupations foreign to the genesaic act? Is it not reasonable to suppose that the creative power, not meeting in its disturbed functions

the conditions requisite for the elaboration of a normal product, the conception might be from its origin imperfect, and the being which proceeded therefrom one of those monsters which are described in treatises on teratology?

“ May we be permitted a suggestion to justify this hypothesis? We admit, with most nosologists, that long and deep grief can trouble nutrition to such an extent as to give rise to heteromorphous tissues—having no analogy in the human economy—as cancer, in its numerous varieties. Why, then, may not disturbance in conception bring on identical deviations in the proper constitution of the human egg?

“ Let us see now what are the consequences to those given to this practice of conjugal onanism.

“ In man the genesaic act, accomplished *normally and completely*, leaves at its close a condition of well-being comparable to that which results from the satisfaction of an imperious necessity. To the most formidable nervous disturbance soon succeeds a perfect calm, and

from the most troubled disposition of mind a tendency to gaiety and warmth of heart. On the contrary, when the function has been interrupted by a previous calculation, the ere-thism persists, accompanied by prostration and fatigue, and particularly a tinge of sadness, in which we are tempted to see a phenomenon of conscience akin to remorse—the first chastisement for a fault committed.

“We have many times had confidences confirmatory of the opinion that we have here advanced, from individuals who have consulted us for nervous affections of all sorts. From many instances, we select but one or two:

“*Case I.* A man thirty-three years old, of a marked sanguine temperament and athletic frame; eight years married and the father of six children; a cooper, whose pay did not suffice for the necessities of so numerous a family, except by the utmost economy. His measure was full, and a new-comer was undesirable, so the unfortunate fellow took every precaution to ward off so formidable an eventuality, at the same time continuing with the same assiduity his relationships with his wife. He

assured us that the preservative means, to which he had recourse, differed in no respect from that which in our time is in general usage, and was of a sort to give him every security. This manœuvering lasted scarcely six months, and there had been no other change in the general habits of this man.

“His general condition had undergone no change. His appetite was preserved, and his digestion was as usual in the past. Nevertheless, he grew thin; a slight trembling agitated his frame when in the vertical position, and he was often obliged to stop his work. ‘Besides,’ he said, ‘I perceived myself giddy, and often in the middle of the street I saw the houses turn around me.’ Nothing in the organic condition of this patient, notwithstanding a very careful examination, being able to enlighten us as to the cause of these grave symptoms, for a moment we thought it might be spermatorrhœa. But after a new examination, we were compelled to reject this diagnosis. We then definitely stopped at an idea which had, we should avow, seduced us, because it was a new opportunity to verify an opinion

which had greatly pre-occupied us—that is to say, that the pathologic condition under observation was owing to a nervous perturbation, caused by abnormal sexual relations. We had further but to remember the classic axiom, *sublata causa tollitur effectus*; and our whole prescription was limited to the recommendation—not to restore the rights to nature—he might then have demanded of us that we should undertake to support a seventh child, and, as he could not himself raise it, he might have been right—we advised him to observe continence, representing to him the danger to which his present culpable conduct was leading him, and we undertook to indicate to him the resources which hygiene afforded, to diminish the sacrifice which we demanded of his firmness. The advice was faithfully followed; for, hardly two months afterward, we had the satisfaction of seeing the patient, who came to thank us, and we scarcely recognized him, so great was the change of his external appearance. He had regained his *embonpoint*, and he felt no trace of his former troubles.

“*Observation II.*—M. M. is a young man of

25 years, and of a marked nervo-sanguine temperament. He was book-keeper in a large commercial house. All his life he had enjoyed irreproachable health, until the date of the accident which brought him to consult us. M. stated that he had always moderately indulged in the pleasures of love ; that, for the last five years, from the first time he accomplished the genesaic act, he had never bound himself to a rigorous continence. He had never had any venereal disease.

“ However, for two years, he noticed when he was urinating and much hurried and desirous of finishing quickly, he felt pruritus near the urinary passage, and following it a pollution without any voluptuous sensation. Remark that this occurred without any excitation, and even in the absence of any erotic thought. This accident was frequently repeated, and soon not a day passed without its appearing. His general health was not thereby much affected, and about that time the erections lost their energy somewhat, without the solicitations of the senses being any less lively than before.

“While matters were going on thus, he contracted amorous relations with a young girl who worked beside him and in the same bureau, and who from her condition and fortune appeared never destined to become his wife.

“As he felt for this person a true affection, and as he especially objected above all things to a revelation of their misconduct, there were no artifices or precautions of any kind that were not employed to deceive nature, while satisfying his ardent passion ; within, however, the limits of moderation.

“But soon he was seized with attacks of head-ache in the sinciputal regions and such a feebleness of intelligence that he could not unite his ideas and follow any slightly complicated reasoning. He was finally compelled to ask leave of absence from his employer, until his recovery. We have neglected to add that this young man was much emaciated, that his digestion had become laborious, and that the least muscular exercise quickly fatigued him. For six months we deluged him with anti-spasmodics in every form, iron, *Charbon de Belloc*,

cold baths as the season allowed, and especially a strengthening regime. No change took place, in spite of the combinations of treatment which, however, seemed to be very appropriate, when the patient himself, in a moment of confidence, put us in the way of investigations which we had before neglected. Once informed upon the habits of M., we did not hesitate to attach all the morbid symptoms with which he was affected to *the abnormal performance of the genitalic act*, and to advise him resolutely to abstain entirely from these culpable relations, leaving him the choice of absolute continence or a return to habits in conformity with the demands of nature, and under circumstances where delicacy and honor would not be implicated.

“We endeavored to act with sufficient energy upon the mind of our patient to receive his attention, and we succeeded fully, as will be seen.

“A full and frank avowal took place, followed by a touching scene between the two lovers. The young girl was inconsolable; she behaved so well that she soon became Madame M.

“Three months had scarcely elapsed, when we met them one day accidentally. He informed us of his happiness and his radical cure. He had willingly followed our counsel and found himself so well that he was not even tempted to infringe upon it.”

“*Observation III.*—A man came to us one morning to consult us, saying that he felt himself *going* day by day—it was his expression—and that his strength was wasting, in spite of his usual appetite; that he digested with ease, and was comfortably nourished. He immediately added, that he suffered nowhere and he did not know to what to attribute his condition.

“This is the circumstantial history of this patient.

“M. B., 36 years of age, by profession a designer, of a nervous temperament, and originally of a robust constitution, but actually deteriorated, had been married seven years and was already the father of seven living children. Our attention was immediately directed toward the probable cause of a nervous disorder, the imprint of which this man bore

upon his countenance. To our queries directed by this view, he replied, that his wife having found her health much shattered by an uninterrupted succession of pregnancies, and having run great risk of dying in her last confinement, he had resolved to surround their relations with the most minute care, so as to prevent a new conception. He gave the details with a minuteness unnecessary to repeat here. It is sufficient to say that this man put into practice, to calm the fears of his wife, otherwise very ardent, the best calculated refinements of conjugal onanism. There resulted from these manœuvres a collapse which held the husband in a state of demi-syncope, the duration of which extended sometimes for an entire hour, and the woman herself had been a prey, since that time, to nervous attacks and to a marked wasting away. Our prescription was to entirely renounce conjugal relations or to practice them normally, under the pain of the most serious consequences to both parties. However, we thought ourselves authorised, under the light of a simple precaution, to advise the husband not to approach his wife until after the twelfth

day from the beginning of her menstrual period. We saw this patient six months afterwards and found him literally transformed. All the symptoms previously announced had entirely disappeared, his health was completely restored under the influence of regular conduct. We will remark, in passing, that Madame B. did not become pregnant for a space of nearly two years, after which time we lost sight of her. We could report many similar cases, but with only unnecessary repetitions, etc., etc.

“We have at our disposition numerous facts which rigorously prove the disastrous influence of abnormal coitus to the woman, but we think it useless to publish them. All practitioners have more or less observed them, and it will only be necessary for them to call upon their memories to supply what our silence leaves. ‘However, it is not difficult to conceive,’ says Dr. Francis Devay, ‘the degree of perturbation that a like practice should exert upon the genital system of woman by provoking desires which are not gratified; a profound stimulation felt throughout the entire

apparatus; the uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries enter into a state of orgasm, a storm which is not appeased by the natural crisis; a nervous super-excitation persists. There occurs then what would take place, if, presenting food to a famished man, one should snatch it from his mouth, after having thus violently excited his appetite. The sensibilities of the womb and the entire reproductive system are teased for no purpose. It is to this cause, too often repeated, that we should attribute the multiple neuroses, those strange affections which originate in the genital system of woman. Our conviction respecting them is based upon a great number of observations. Furthermore, the moral relations existing between the married couple undergo unfortunate changes; this affection, founded upon reciprocal esteem, is little by little, effaced by the repetition of an act which pollutes the marriage bed; from thence proceed certain hard feelings, certain deep impressions which gradually growing, eventuate in the scandalous ruptures of which the community rarely know the real motive.\*

\* *Traité speciale d'hygiène des familles*, p. 180.

“In fact, very many women are the victims of the most cruel injustice on the part of their husbands, who frustrate their incontestable rights; rights which they are bound alike with them to allay in their relationships, the ardors and emotions which they cannot prevent. We have known more than one of these unfortunates, who having as mothers several times paid their tribute to nature, were still ignorant what could be the physical attraction of their conjugal relations, although they bitterly perceived that some serious wrong was done them.

“If the good harmony of families, and the reciprocal relations are seriously menaced by the invasion of these detestable practices, the health of women, as we have already intimated, is fearfully injured. A great number of neuralgias appear to us to have no other cause. Many women that we have interrogated on this matter, have fortified this opinion. But that which to us has passed to the condition of incontestable truth, is the prevalence of uterine troubles of enervation among the married, hysterical symptoms which are met with in the conjugal relation as often as

among young virgins, arising from the vicious habits of the husbands in their conjugal intercourse. We recommend this etiological point to the investigations and meditations of physicians. Still more, there is a graver affection, which is daily increasing, and which if nothing arrests its invasion, will soon have attained the proportions of a scourge; we speak of the degeneration of the womb. We do not hesitate to place in the foremost rank, among the causes of this redoubtable disease, the refinements of civilization, and especially the artifices introduced in our day in the gynaecic act. When there is no procreation, although the procreative faculties are excited, we see these pseudo-morphoses arise. Thus it is noted that polypi and schirrus of the womb are common among prostitutes.\* And it is easy to account for the manner of action of this pathogenetic cause, if we consider how probable it is that the ejaculation and contact of the sperm with the uterine neck, constitutes for the woman, the crisis of the genital function, by appeasing the venereal orgasm and calm-

\* Burdach, loc. cit. t. v. p. 17.

ing the voluptuous emotions, under the action of which the entire economy is convulsed. And finally, who can demonstrate that there does not exist in the fecundatory liquid some special property *sui generis* which makes its projection upon the mouth of the womb, and its contact with this part, an indispensable condition to the innocuousness of the coitus?

“ This opinion, which we have not found stated in any work, one of our most distinguished practitioners, (Prof. Villars, of Besançon,) entirely partakes in, and for many years has not ceased in his Course of lectures to teach and to defend on every necessary occasion.

“ But we have just said that it was easy to explain one of the modes of action of the pathogenetic cause now under consideration, and we will explain. The uterine neck, the same as the penis, is congested during copulation. But while with man the congestion is dissipated with the stimulus that has provoked it, in the woman it persists for a greater or less degree, *when the genital function is not physiologically completed*, and new congestions coming to be successively added to the preceding,

under the same circumstances, there results, first, inflammatory or atonic engorgements, then ulcerations, and finally—particularly if there be some predisposition—encephaloid degenerations, to which so many poor creatures owe a premature death.

“ The peremptory demonstration of the opinion we advance is found in statistics, by the great disproportion recognized in the degree of relative frequency of uterine affections in the city and in the country. Assuredly, we do not pretend to attribute the superior health which women living far from the city enjoy, in this respect, exclusively to the purity of their morals ; but we place this cause in the front rank, among those which give a kind of immunity against the greater number of the lesions of the womb.

“ Let us pass now to considerations of another kind. In a moral point of view, these conjugal frauds are culpable, for the reason that they frustrate nature in the guarantees upon which are based the perpetuity of our species, and render illusory the most important of all the functions. In effect, comparative anatomy

reveals to us all the solicitude of which this function has been the object, for the accomplishment of the end for which it was created, by the wealth of precaution with which the Creator has surrounded it in every series of beings. All the acts which concur to this grand end are irresistibly bound to the animal, and are easily executed in circumstances apparently the most unfavorable, thanks to the admirable disposition of the organs employed. Let us look at an example. It is necessary for the dog, which only ejaculates his seed drop by drop, to have a prolonged coitus to be fecundating. That this duration should be sufficient, it was not abandoned to the chance of the animal's determination. In consequence, his penis acquires, after its introduction into the vagina, a considerable volume, and its erection is not effected until after its intromission, by reason of a bone which gives solidity to it. But, it is a remarkable thing, that toward the base of this bone the verge swells, in such a manner that its dimensions markedly exceed that of the vulva, which it had just passed through without obstacle—a

Providential procedure, thanks to which, the animal, against his will, terminates, sometimes with pain, an act which he at first sought for guided by instinct, and commenced under the impulse of pleasure.

“ There are some species in which but a single copulation can be accomplished by the same couple, the male dying immediately, and the female living only till after laying the eggs.

“ ‘ It is from the general exhaustion, that insects and the arachnidan must find their death in copulation. Most, on the other hand, if they do not die, give signs of a profound collapse and a kind of syncope, either in the male or female, during rapid coitions, and sometimes even during those which are prolonged or frequently repeated within a certain time, as is seen in the male of the cock-chafer, the female of various spiders,’ etc.\*

“ We have, in other places, said why man, in his quality of reasonable and moral being, should be free in the act of reproduction, as he is in his functions which relate to the life

\* Duges. *Traité de physiologie comparée de l'homme et de animaux.* T. III. p. 285.

of the individual. We shall not, therefore, renew this subject. A certain motive, however, is necessary, which should solicit him to obey the law, by virtue of which the race is perpetuated.

“ 1. The attraction of pleasure.

“ 2. The sentiment of paternity.

“ If the latter may be wanting, the first will still be efficacious. But if he should cheat, and no further security should exist, the race will run the risk of becoming extinct. Then this element, so powerful in the order of the universe, would be found abandoned to the hazards of a free will, and would produce a dangerous conflict between the interests of the individual and that of his species.

“ We may, we trust, be pardoned for remarking, upon the artifices imagined to prevent fecundation, that there is in them an immense danger, of incalculable limits. We do not fear to be contradicted or taxed with exaggeration in elevating them into the proportions of a true calamity.”

This chapter I had supposed to be comple-

ed at this point, but the judgment of a friend to whom I gave the manuscript of the entire work for his critical opinion, has induced me to add what follows.

The opinion expressed was to the effect that this was the most important chapter of the volume, for if any marked benefit was to arise from the publication, it would originate mainly from the picture held up to public scrutiny in this chapter, and therefore it was eminently desirable that it should be as perspicuous and complete as possible; that it had been left vague, superficial, and unsatisfactory. My article already alluded to, on the "Causes of the Physical Decline of American Women," in part supplies the alleged want.

It is undeniable that all the methods employed to prevent pregnancy are physically injurious. Some of these have been characterized with sufficient explicitness, and the injury resulting from incomplete coitus to both parties has been made evident to all who are willing to be convinced. It should require but a moment's consideration to convince any one of the harmfulness of the common use of cold

ablutions and astringent infusions and variously medicated washes. Simple and often wonderfully salutary and grateful as is cold water to a diseased limb, festering with inflammation, yet few are rash enough to cover a gouty toe, rheumatic knee, or an erysipelatous head with cold water. Nor would any mother dare to plunge her child into a bathtub when rosy with measles or scarlet fever; nor even, in summer, when sweating with the simple heat of the sun, would she allow him to bathe himself. Yet, when in the general state of nervous and physical excitement attendant upon coitus, when the organs principally engaged in this act, are congested and turgid with blood, do you think you can with impunity throw a flood of cold, or even luke-warm water far into the vitals in a continual stream? Often too, women add strong medicinal agents, intended to destroy by dissolution, the spermatic germs, ere they have time to fulfil their natural destiny. These powerful astringents suddenly corrugate and close the glandular structure of the parts, and this is followed necessarily by a corresponding reaction, and

the final result is debility and exhaustion, signalled by leucorrhœa, prolapsus and other diseases.

Finally, of the use of intermediate tegumentary coverings, made of thin rubber or gold-beater's skin, and so often relied upon as absolute preventives, Madame de Stael is reputed to have said: "They are cobwebs for protection, and bulwarks against love." Their employment certainly must produce a feeling of shame and disgust utterly destructive of the true delight of pure hearts and refined sensibilities. They are suggestive of licentiousness and the brothel, and their employment degrades to beastiality the true feelings of manhood and the holy state of matrimony. Neither do they give, except in a very limited degree, the protection desired. Furthermore, they produce (as alleged by the best modern French writers, who are more familiar with the effects of their use than we in the United States) certain physical lesions from their irritating presence as foreign bodies, and also from the chemicals employed in their fabrication and other effects inseparable from their employment, oftentimes of a really serious nature.

I will not further enlarge upon these instrumentalities. Sufficient has been said to convince any one that to trifle with the grand functions of our organism, to attempt to deceive and thwart nature in her highly ordained prerogatives,—no matter how simple seem to be the means employed—is to incur a heavy responsibility and run a fearful risk. It matters little whether a railroad train is thrown from the track by a frozen drop of rain or a huge boulder lying in the way, the result is the same, the injuries as great. Moral degradation, physical disability, premature exhaustion and decrepitude are the result of these physical frauds, and force upon our convictions the adage which the history of every day confirms, that *“Honesty is the best policy.”*

## CHAPTER VIII.

### INFANTICIDE.

OF all the sins, physical and moral, against man and God, I know of none so utterly to be condemned as the very common one of the destruction of the child while yet in the womb of the mother. So utterly repugnant is it, that I can scarcely express the loathing with which I approach the subject. Murder! Murder in cold blood, without cause, of an unknown child; one's nearest relative; in fact, part of one's very being; actually having, not only one's own blood in its being, but that blood momentarily interchanging! Good God! Does it seem possible that such depravity can exist in a parent's breast—in a mother's heart!

'T is for no wrong that it has committed that its sweet life is so cruelly taken away. Its coming is no disgrace; its creation was not in sin, but—its mother "don't want to

be bothered with any more brats; can hardly take care of what she has got; is going to Europe in the spring."

We can forgive the poor, deluded girl,— seduced, betrayed, abandoned,— who, in her wild frenzy, destroys the mute evidence of her guilt. We have only sympathy and sorrow for her. But for the married shirk, who disregards her divinely-ordained duty, we have nothing but contempt, even if she be the lordly woman of fashion, clothed in purple and fine linen. If glittering gems adorn her person, within there is foulness and squalor.

"Infanticide is no new crime. Savages have existed in all times, and abortions and destruction of children at and subsequent to birth have been practiced among all the barbarous nations of antiquity. The most cultivated and right-minded had some good reason for so doing, and acted in conformity with a supposed duty. When the child was of feeble physique, or malformed, it was, among certain nations, thought to be right to destroy it. Acting thus according to their conscience, they did rightly—the fault was in their igno-

rance of right and wrong. Sometimes from a religious superstition they sacrificed their children, perhaps with tears of regret, and this unknown sin was doubtless forgiven to the benighted mother.

But most commonly the savages of past ages were no better than the women who commit such infamous murders to-day, to avoid the cares, the expense or the duty of nursing and tending a child.

“ Infanticide was permitted among the greater part of the people of antiquity, and it is still, in most of the countries where civilization has not penetrated. The newborn are put to death, or exposed in such a manner that they must needs perish, unless chance or compassion preserve them. Among most of the people of Greece the newborn was laid at the feet of the father until he decided upon his lot. This custom was in vogue among the Athenians; the Thebans alone held it in reprobation. Romulus, who desired population, prohibited the exposure of male children and of the eldest girls, and allowed only that of the other girls after three years had passed.

However, in the corruption of manners which soon prevailed, no account was kept of these restrictions, and the Romans adopted the custom of the Greeks, by drowning their children and abandoning them in public places, that they might be devoured by animals, or else they placed them at the doors of bachelors, who were at liberty to make slaves of them.

“ Infanticide and exposure were also the custom among the Romans, Medes, Canaanites, Babylonians and other eastern nations, with the exception of the Israelites and Egyptians. The Scandinavians killed their offspring from pure fantasy. The Norwegians, after having carefully swaddled their children, put some food into their mouths, placed them under the roots of trees or under the rocks to preserve them from ferocious beasts. Infanticide was also permitted among the Chinese, and we saw, during the last century, vehicles going round the streets of Pekin daily to collect the bodies of the dead infants. To-day there exists foundling hospitals to receive children abandoned by their parents. The same cus-

tom is also observed in Japan, in the isles of the Southern Ocean, at Otaheite, and among several savage people of North America. It is related of the Jaggars of Guinea, that they devour their own children.”\* We have given the motives which cause the infanticide.

“ The Greeks, in cases of deformity which did not affect the duration of life, sacrificed the children because their existence would be onerous to their family and without utility to the State.

“ In some cases, however, they had a semblance of legality, and it was exacted before destroying their monsters, that they should be seen by five neighbors; but the law of the Twelve Tables relieved the father from this single formality, and gave to him the right to have his deformed children destroyed. The savages of North America and the Peruvians pitilessly sacrificed all deformed children.

“ In Sparta, as is known, individuality disappeared before the exigencies of State. So the laws of Lycurgus left it to the magistrate to

\* Burdach. *Traité de physiologie.* T. V. p. 85, et suivant.

decide if the father ought or not to raise his child, and if he considered it weakly or malformed, it was cast into the ditch. Plato and Aristotle in their Institutes condemned to exposure infants judged to be feeble and unable to serve the country.

“At Athens it was particularly girls and those of the inferior classes that were condemned to death. The ancient Norwegians followed the same custom with regard to females when there were too many in the same family.

“On the coast of Guinea, in Peru, and among the Hottentots, in the case of twin pregnancy, the feeblest was put to death, and in preference, the girl, when the sexes were different.

“In Madagascar and New Granada and Greenland, when the mother died during or after confinement, her living child was buried with her.

“In case of famine or misery in China, New Holland, Kamtchatka, they killed their children, as they formerly did in Athens.

“Superstitious ideas sometimes ruled infanticide. In Canada certain classes destroyed

their first-born. In Madagascar they exposed children born on supposed unlucky days. In the East Indies they destroyed children to whom the astrologers predicted ill luck.

“The ancient Celts put their new-born upon a buckler, which they placed on the surface of a river, and regarded as the fruit of adultery those borne away by the stream. The Hottentots killed one of twins because they were convinced that but one could be begotten by one man.

“Abortions were means frequently employed in antiquity, and still in our day among certain barbarous people. It was the women who performed this sacrifice; sometimes not to be separated from their husbands during the time of nursing, when they were esteemed impure; sometimes to avoid the trouble of nursing their children.

“The practice of abortion has nothing in it to astonish one who does not know that the embryo is endowed with life, because this life is not yet observable. So in the latter days of Rome, women made no scruple of getting rid of an inconvenient pregnancy, and which espe-

cially interfered with their taste for debauch. This custom lasted until the epoch of Ulpian, A. D. 205, who repressed it by severe penalties.

“There are even systems of philosophy which have called for infanticide, with the avowed end of preventing a too great increase of population. Plato and Aristotle were advocates of this opinion, and these Stoicks justified this monstrous practice by alleging that the child only acquired a soul at the moment when it ceased to have uterine life and commenced to respire. From whence it resulted, that the child, not being animated, its destruction was not murder. Nothing can ever authorize in civilized countries such practices for the purpose of maintaining population within proper limits.

“The attempts against the life of the child which are committed at the present day, are almost always by seduced girls, and the motive is not one of systematic calculation, but the shame and misery which follow their abandonment. It is unfortunately true that abortion and infanticide are common, not only in Paris but in all the great capitals of Europe, as well as localities of less importance.

‘ Let us hear the authoritative testimony of Prof. Ambrose Jardien, to whom the science of medical law owes so many remarkable works :

“ ‘ It is not only in Paris,’ he says, ‘ that the crime of abortion is multiplied in so deplorable a manner. In a single session, in September, 1856, the Court of Assizes, *de la Drôme*, gave a decision in a case in which fifty-two accused appeared as authors or accomplices of numerous abortions, committed in some neighboring community of the department. We know that in certain countries abortion is practiced in a manner almost public, without speaking of the East, where it has, so to speak, entered into the manners of the country. We see it, in America, in a great city like New York, constituting a regular business and not prevented, where it has enriched more than one midwife. The number of children born dead or expelled before their natural time, which has considerably increased during the last fifty years, is a proof of this. For a population of 76,770 persons in 1805, there were but forty-seven still-born children; in 1849, in a

population of 450,000, the number of still-born children amounted to 1,320; that is to say, in a population which has sextupled, the still-born and premature births have increased thirty-sevenfold.\*

The same author, speaking of infanticide, gives the following resume of the actual situation:

“England does not yield to Germany or France in the frequency of the crime of infanticide. Taylor for two years nearly corresponding, gives the following figures, which can leave no doubt upon this point: In 1862, in 20,591 criminal inquests which took place in England and Wales, 3,239 were of children under one year, and in 124 verdicts of voluntary murders, more than a half were infanticide. In 1863, in 22,757 inquests, 3,664 were of infants, and of these 166 of them were verdicts of murder. As in France the majority were of women in service.†

\* Ambrose Jardien, *Etude Médico légale sur l'avortement etc.*, p. 18. Paris, 1865. Chas. Ballière & Fils.

† Ambrose Jardien, *Etude Médico légale sur l'infanticide*. Paris, 1868.

“At Berlin, according to Caspar,\* the autopsies of the new-born form of themselves a quarter of the legal autopsies. In Paris this proportion is considerably surpassed.

“There is finally, at the present time, a kind of infanticide, which, although it is not so well known, is even more dangerous, because done with impunity. There are parents who recoil with horror at the idea of destroying their offspring, although they would greatly desire to be disengaged of them, who yet place them without remorse with nurses, who enjoy the sinister reputation of never returning the children to those who have entrusted them to their care. These unfortunate little beings are condemned to perish from inanition and bad treatment.

“The number of these innocent victims is greater than would be imagined, and very certainly exceeds that of the marked infanticides sent by the public prosecutor to the Court of the Assizes.

“We may now close this chapter by saying

\* Caspar, *Traité pratique de médecine légale.* t. II, p. 3. Paris, 1862.

that the only lawful obstacles to the excessive development of the population are, moral restraint, the introduction into laws of new restrictions upon marriage, a prolonged maternal nursing, the choice for conjugal relations of the intermenstrual epoch, when conception, if not impossible, is very improbable, and finally organic changes in the life of the women, by the amelioration of the lot of the poorer classes."

I have here quoted the somewhat exaggerated statistics of the still-born in New York in order that we here may see what is said of us abroad. These figures give somewhat erroneous ideas, because the increase of still-born children is owing to other causes than those to which they are ascribed.

First, we have had during the last half century an immense emigration. Many of these deaths are owing to the severity of the passage, ship fever, etc. *en route*, and the miserable condition and want of many of the persons who have composed this emigration.

Second, the increase of poverty and misery, and consequent malformations and osseous

distortions of the mothers. I have myself delivered many hundred women with instruments in this city during the last twenty-five years, and they have almost universally been of foreign birth.

Third, the statistics are now kept with far greater accuracy than ever before, so that no burials are now permitted without a physician's certificate, which is required by the Board of Health from every sexton.

Fourth, the above quoted authors have barely touched upon the real matter in their writings on "the destructive methods" of removing the effects of pregnancy. Infanticide, as it is generally considered, (destroying a child after quickening,) is of very rare occurrence in New York, whereas abortions (destroying the embryo before quickening), are of daily habit, in the families of the best informed and most religious; among those abounding in wealth, as well as among the poor and needy. The young girl, seduced and destined to obloquy and shame, be she rich or poor, will seek any means, even known sinful ones, to hide her sad fault; to her we give our tearful sym-

pathy, and society hesitatingly condemns her seemingly necessitated conduct. Could she secretly enter some private retreat, and after giving birth to her child then and there at a full time, and leave it for the charitable to bring up properly—as is done in the great cities of Europe—the consequences of the sin might be lessened.

But the married and well-to-do, who by means of medicines and operations produce abortion at early periods of pregnancy, have no excuse except the pretense that they do not consider it murder till the child quickens. I will not here repeat what I have already said as fully as may be necessary in another place.\*

A knowledge of the great danger and frequent death which so generally accompanies this nefarious procedure will do more to stop the practice than any argument that I can offer. If the statistics of the mortality be attentively considered, few will willingly run the risk of life which this record of “figures

\* See Appendix, “Causes of the Physical Decline of American Women.”

which do not lie" will tell them. And yet, any statistics attainable are very incomplete. False certificates are daily given by attending physicians. Men, if they are only rich enough, die of "congestion of the brain," not "delirium tremens," and women similarly situated do not die from the effects of abortion, but of "inflammation of the bowels," etc.

One lady, to whom I was called in consultation six hours before her death, confessed to me that she had produced abortion upon herself twenty-one times previously! The certificate given, I afterwards learned, was "dysentry." Statistics therefore are unreliable; so, while it is safe to say that we may trust implicitly to all the deaths given, we may mentally, perhaps double the number. How many are the deaths confessedly resulting from abortion?

Jardien\* reports that in thirty-four cases of criminal abortion, where their history was known, twenty-two were followed, as a consequence, by death. In fifteen cases, necessarily produced by physicians, not one was fatal.

\* AMBROISE JARDIEN, *Etude Médico légale sur l' infanticide.* Paris, 1868.

This mortality is evidently, however, greater than would occur when the patient had the care of a family, and when attended by proper nurses, skilful physicians, etc. It refers to those cases where concealment is the great aim, and where everything is sacrificed to that. Still under all cases, forced abortions are necessarily operations of great danger as well as suffering, and death under the best possible contingencies will be not infrequent.

But death is not the only result. A lady who one November came to me "to get rid of a baby, because her husband was going to Europe in the spring, and she wanted to go with him and couldn't be bothered by a young one," failing to enlist me in this nefarious scheme, finally found a—I was going to say, physician—a somebody, who effected the object, and, perhaps, as carefully as it could be done. But inflammation ensued—as it so frequently does—and was not easily arrested. I was called to her some weeks afterwards, and she was almost exhausted with cellulitis and pyæmia. Her husband sailed for Liverpool in June without her, as she had not been

able to sit up for nearly six months! It is now five years since, and if there is a woman to be pitied in this city, it is she. Physically she is a miserable invalid, with no disease except the consequence of that utter exhaustion resulting from the forced abortion. She had then three children; her oldest son was accidentally drowned, and her two daughters died of scarlet fever while the family were spending a winter in Matanzas for the mother's health. She now lives in her magnificent palace, with hundreds of thousands of dollars at her disposal; but her home is desolate and her heart lonely, for the result of that disastrous inflammation is the disorganization of both ovaries, and she is inevitably childless, and bitterly does she mourn her past follies. I can enlarge upon this point with numerous like illustrations—so can your next door physician—but it is useless.

The death and illness of the mother, prolonged, as it often is, is bad enough; but there are results of this crime which possibly may be considered more deplorable. I think any mother might so admit it.

A lady determined not to have any more children went to a professed abortionist, and he attempted to effect the desired end by violence. With a pointed instrument the attempt was again and again made, but without the looked-for result. So vigorously was the effort made, that, astonished at no result being obtained, the individual stated that there must be some mistake, that the lady could not be pregnant, and refused to perform any further operations. Partially from doubt and partially from fear, nothing further was attempted ; and in due process of time the woman was delivered of an infant, shockingly mutilated, with one eye entirely put out, and the brain so injured that this otherwise robust child was entirely wanting in ordinary sense. This poor mother, it would seem, needs no future punishment for her sin. Ten years, face to face with this poor idiot, whose imbecility was her direct work—has it not punished her sufficiently ?

Yet, with such facts before us, brown stone palaces will continue to be built in the Fifth Avenue, and the business of abortion will thrive, and the rich occupants will snap their

fingers at the laws ; for have they not the reputations of the wives and daughters of lawyers, juries, aye, even of the judges themselves in their hands ? Lucky, indeed, if they cannot, for like reasons, control him who alone has the power to pardon, if, by chance, found guilty !

The heinousness of the sin ; the possibility of death immediate and painful ; the likelihood of prolonged illness and future debility ; the chance of a blighted being constantly before the sight—these are all insufficient to prevent this horrible iniquity which is so common to-day ! I went into a fashionable boarding-house yesterday, in which were four wives of several years' standing, from twenty-two to thirty-five years of age. There was not a baby there, nor had there been ; nor was there among them one healthy woman either !

A popular clergyman of Brooklyn said in the course of a late sermon : “ Why send missionaries to India when child-murder is here of daily, almost hourly occurrence ; aye, when the hand that puts money into the contribution-box to-day, yesterday or a month ago, or

to-morrow, will murder her own unborn offspring?

“The Hindoo mother when she abandons her babe upon the sacred Ganges, is, contrary to her heart, obeying a supposed religious law, and you desire to convert her to your own worship of the Moloch of Fashion and Laziness and love of Greed. Out upon such hypocrisy !”

I see no resort left, no staying this tide of sin, unless it be in the power of the church. There should be no queazy sensibilities, no mawkish delicacy; the sin should be grappled with and crushed out. The pulpit of every denomination should make common cause and fulminate its anathemas against every abettor of this enormity. I know not why there should be such tenderness of speech on the part of the clergy, for there is no such modesty on the part of the actors concerned. Arrayed in gorgeous silks, satins and velvets, covered with flashing gems—mine is but the common story of every physician—I have had unknown women walk into my office, and inquire, “Are you the doctor?” and upon an

affirmative reply, without further preface, say, “I want you to produce an abortion for me,” as coolly as if ordering a piece of beef for dinner.

Do the clergy consider this less a sin than lying, blaspheming or stealing? Do they sympathize with it? It is impossible for them to ignore it, for it is everywhere. Do they think it enough to publish, once a year, resolutions against it, which few men and no women ever see? Rev. John Todd\* has come out boldly and eloquently. Should not it be the subject of, at least, one sermon yearly by every clergyman in America and the world?

I have dedicated this volume to the clergy of America, because they are the great moral lever-power of the country. They can make this vice disgraceful; they can compel it to be kept dark; they can prevent its being the common boast of the women, “that they know too much to have babies.”

I have endeavored to put the physical argument in their hands; I have striven to enlist their hearty co-operation in the cause, and

\* Todd. “Serpents in the Dove’s Nest.”

now I leave it with the confidence that He who founded this great nation, carried it through such great vicissitudes, will not leave it to self-destruction and moral degradation.

## CHAPTER IX.

### CONJUGAL RELATIONS DURING THE PERIOD OF MENSTRUATION.

THE principal object I had in view, in writing this work, has been accomplished with the closing of the last chapter, yet the common mind is so imperfectly informed respecting one of the great natural functions of womanhood, and so little aware of any law of duty in reference to it, that I have not hesitated, even at the expense of materially adding to the size of this volume, to draw still further from Mayer's carefully prepared statement.

To many it may seem that it is unnecessary to caution against contracting relationships at the period of the monthly flow, thinking that the instinctive laws of cleanliness and delicacy were sufficient to restrain the indulgence of the appetites, but they are little cognizant of the true condition of things in this world.

Often have I had husbands inform me that

they had not missed having sexual relations with their wives once or more times a day for several years; and scores, with delicate frames and broken-down health, have revealed to me similar facts, and I have been compelled to make personal appeals to the husbands to refrain from indulgence during this period.

It is unnecessary for our present purpose to give any account of the object, character or other particulars respecting the menstruation of women. The different theories of past days respecting it, and the present received opinions are to be found in all works on physiology, and popular and professional medical works now easily accessible to every one. Our only aim at present is to determine if this flow should be considered as any obstacle to the generative act, *and if we should prohibit sexual relations during the continuance of this flow.*

The earliest authority is that of Moses, who rigorously ordained entire abstinence, not only during the actual flowing, but for such a number of days as to entirely surpass any ordinary duration of the periods.

But at the present day Moses is considered

by some to have been exceedingly dictatorial, or to have ordained laws for warm climates, for an ardent people, from prejudice, for the sake of causing the Jews to do something distinctive from the habits of other people around, as he is said to have ordained circumcision, and forbidden the use of pork, etc., etc.,—rites and customs mainly intended to separate his chosen people from the Gentiles adjacent. We will look at what he did order, and then review the science of the subject and finally judge whether his ordinations were in conformity therewith.

“ The woman also with whom man shall lie with seed of copulation, they shall both bathe themselves in water, and be unclean until the even.

“ And if a woman have an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days; and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the even. And every thing that she lieth upon in her separation shall be unclean; every thing also that she sitteth upon shall be unclean. And whosoever toucheth her bed shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. And whosoever toucheth any thing that she sat upon shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in wa-

ter, and be unclean until the even. And if it be on her bed, or on any thing whereon she sitteth, when he toucheth it, he shall be unclean till the even. And if any man lie with her at all, and her flowers be upon him, he shall be unclean seven days; and all the bed whereon he lieth shall be unclean. And if a woman have an issue of her blood many days out of the time of her separation, or if it run beyond the time of her separation, all the days of the issue of her uncleanness shall be as the days of her separation: she shall be unclean. Every bed whereon she lieth all the days of her issue shall be unto her as the bed of her separation; and whatsoever she sitteth upon shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her separation. And whatsoever toucheth those things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. But if she be cleansed of her issue, then she shall number to herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean.”—LEVITICUS xv. 19-28.

“In the law of Manou, as in the law of Moses, the woman is reputed impure at the date of her periods, as is shewn by this passage. Whatsoever desire he may feel, he (the man) should not approach a woman, when her periods commence to appear, nor even lie upon the same bed.\*

\* Laws of Manou.

“The Talmud still increasing the rigor of these ordinances, ordains: ‘If a woman co-habit with her husband the evening of the appearance of her menses, whatever may be their duration, she can only commence to count the days of her uncleanness, from the date of the fifth day which follows the cohabitation,’ which will make the day of her purification the twelfth.

“We note in one of the verses of Leviticus, above quoted, that there is a question made respecting *a flow out of the ordinary time, or not ceasing when they ought to cease.*

“Commentators are exercised to distinguish between these flows, those which actually proceed from the same source as the menstrual flow, from those due to some other cause, and to this end they have sought for specific characteristics in the color of the blood which escapes from the uterus.

“Five sorts of blood have been reputed impure, the red, black, saffron-shaded, or of water mixed with clayey earth, or finally, that of water mixed half with wine.

“It is unnecessary to say how indeterminate

are these characteristics. In our day and with the present state of science, such a confusion can no longer exist, unless there be a metrorhagia, coming on immediately after the menses, without leaving sufficient time for them to run through the usual phases; for if the blood was altogether colorless, and had taken very nearly the appearance of vaginal mucus, no error would be permitted, and the new flow would be considered as an accidental occurrence. Still more surely would a hemorrhage between the periods be recognized as the symptom of some pathological lesion.

“ Furthermore, the distinction is unimportant in relation to the question at issue, for if sexual relations ought to be avoided during the periods, for a still more urgent reason they should be suspended during a hemorrhage of whatever sort, originating in the sexual organs.

“ The laws prescribed by Moses are observed still, by the greater number of Jewesses. In the great capitals, indeed, there is some probable laxity, and it is noted that there too the primitive Jewish types are gradually becom-

ing effaced, which is perhaps owing in part to this very circumstance.

“These institutions may be regarded, to a certain point, as rules of medical police, inspired by certain mystical ideas of hygiene, spread throughout the Orient, with a generally accepted religious character. If, in this respect, we compare the Hebraic legislation with that of the Egyptians and Hindoos, we shall be struck with the fact that Moses greatly simplified the practices of purification, suppressing all founded on superstition and maintaining only that which was really useful to hygiene and favorable to morals. But the purity of the body conduced to another end of an infinitely superior order. It was the symbol of interior purity, and was put by the legislator into an intimate relation with the worship of Jehovah and with the holiness demanded by this worship.

“R. P. Debreyne, the celebrated Catholic Casuist, says, ‘It is known that many theologians, upon the authority of Saint Thomas, regard as a mortal sin, the exercise of the marriage rite during the period of menstrua-

tion, because, according to them, this circumstance exposes them to the serious peril of begetting children either leprous or monstrous.'

"Sanchez and a great number of theological writers affirm that that Levitical Law, 'If a man shall lie with a woman having her sickness, . . . both of them shall be cut off.' (xx. 18.) is a prohibition purely ceremonial, to which one is not bound under the evangelical law.

"We are convinced that this precept is as much moral as ceremonial, because the conjugal act exercised during the catamenial period, carries with it a theological wrong, in the sense that it is more or less injurious, or unfavorable to its principal end—generation; not because, as theologians say, it engenders infants that are lepers or monsters, which we do not all believe, but because there is generally nothing produced, either normal or abnormal. Why not? Because menstruation is but a preparatory function, and the discharge, a depletive and expulsive excretion, not fitted for generation, and it is found that

the time immediately following is more favorable to conception, and this is a fact which the experience of every day proves.

“ You see then, that we have no need to depend upon the passage of Ezekiel—‘ If a man be just and do that which is lawful and right, . . . neither hath defiled his neighbour’s wife, neither hath come near to a menstrual woman.’ xviii. 5, 6;—where cohabitation during the menstrual period is ranked with adultery.

“ The same author concludes,\* ‘ the wife is not held to conjugal duty during the epoch of the menstrual flow.’\*

“ It results from the preceding, that in a religious point of view, the marriage act should be proscribed during the menstrual period, at least, according to the Jewish and Christian laws, with this difference, however, that the first add to the interdiction a certain number of days after the cessation of the flow, while the second limit the prohibition only to its actual duration.

“ A book which has recently appeared and which is generally circulated among women, re-

\* DEBREYNE, *loc. cit.*, p. 313.

presents the menstrual functions under a strange aspect. Not content with re-establishing the true signification of this essentially physiological act, and of avenging the most beautiful half of the human race for the degradation which has weighed upon it for antiquity ; the author of this work, without any competence, furthermore, for treating such a subject, considers woman as a sort of divinity, precisely on account of the special tribute this sex pays to nature.\* ‘We know,’ cries he, in an excess of cynical enthusiasm, ‘this sacred being, who, on that account, the middle ages charged with impurity, is found, in reality, to be in nature the saint of saints.’

“We would not have quoted such shocking exaggerations, if it were not to say how painful it is to see a writer justly esteemed for his historical works, commit the fault of usurping a field to which he is entirely a stranger, and giving the prestige of his name to the propagation of opinions both false and prejudicial to society.

“In fact, if we believe Michelet, woman

† MICHELET, *L'amour*, introduction, p. 8.

should be an invalid, ‘afflicted with a constantly bleeding wound,’\* and the duty of the husband is a perpetual adoration of the fetish. Such doctrines are subversive of all ideas received into the bosom of families.

“ Reason and experience both show that sexual relations at the menstrual period are very dangerous for both man and woman, and perhaps also for the offspring, should there chance to be conception.

“ There is no doubt, that for a woman, all undue excitement is injurious at this period. Our daily experience shows us that suppressed courses are the result of great emotion, as anger, fear, etc., and sometimes from the same causes also the contrary effect of haemorrhage occurs. Is it not evident that such nervous disturbance as coitus might cause many similar results, and by preference excite the flowings? But it is no question of the reason, we have the observation of every medical man, and daily proofs that such are the results.

“ And nervous influences are not all. The mechanical action itself plays an important

\* MICHELET, *L'amour*, introd., p. 19.

part in producing the numerous accidents which we observe. It augments the turgescence of the parts, and increases the normal flux until it attains the proportions of a real hæmorrhagic *molimen*, which results in an immediate flow and a serious loss of blood.

“Finally, the peril which we note here is not only observable in regard to the cata-menial flow, but is inherent to the genesaic act itself, whenever there exists a flow of blood from the vulva, from whatever source it emanates. Whatever may be the origin of these flows of blood from the female genitals, the repose of these organs is imperiously demanded.

“As for the man, the danger he runs is not from any virulent properties appertaining to the menstrual blood, as the ancients thought, and as some, perhaps, of the present day believe. No, the blood of the menses has not the malignity ascribed to it by certain naturalists. Authors have maintained, entirely unsupported by facts, however, that women, at the time of this flow, have the power to kill by their touch a young vine; that they

render a tree sterile ; that they turn sauces ; sour wine and milk ; rust iron and steel ; that they cause a pregnant woman to abort, and render another sterile ; that they make dogs mad and even fowls, etc.

“ Paracelsus regarded the menstrual blood as the most subtile of poisons. He asserts that of it the devil makes spiders, fleas, caterpillars and all the other insects that people the air.

“ The blood of the regles differs in no respect from ordinary blood ; has no bad qualities, when coming from healthy women ; but, in another condition, it might have some influence upon external objects, the same as the other secretions from a person affected with any disease.

“ But if the menstrual blood is ordinarily exempt from the injurious qualities which have been attributed to it, it is indeed true that it may contract them, by being too long delayed in the utero-vaginal canal through which it flows ; that it may become corrupt and acquire all the characteristics of decomposed animal liquids, or an acidity and vir-

ulence proportioned to the length of its duration and stagnation in the parts and at the temperature of the locality; or it may participate in the other idiosyncrasies and conditions of the woman, the exact amount of which it is impossible to appreciate. The contact of this vitiated fluid with the gland and urethra of the male organ may, and frequently does, cause superficial excoriations which resemble chancres without having their gravity; blenorragias which resemble specific gonorrhœas and which would deceive us, if they did not speedily yield to appropriate treatment. We will not dwell further upon these facts of daily experience.

“As for the progeny resulting from this impure connection, we will say but little: First, because we think conceptions are very rare during the season of the periods from the *processus* of the ovule, if the theory of Pouchet is true; and secondly, because rigorous and scientific observation is mute on this point. We shall have to invoke old prejudices and popular beliefs if we desire to say anything more than a presumption in regard to the

unfortunate eventualities which weigh so heavily on the child procreated during the menstrual period. Tradition claims that they are born cachectic, affected with scrofula or rickets, and are of dull mind. We repeat, facts are wanting to sustain this belief, which, however, numbers many partisans.

“It is of little consequence whether there is danger or not for the offspring, it is undoubted that it exists for the parents.

“Besides the hygienic question, there are other interests, not less respectable, engaged in this matter. They are those of morals.

“In fact, the woman when she has her periods takes the greatest care to conceal it from all eyes. She is affected instinctively, we will not say willingly, in her dignity. She considers her condition as a blot or an infirmity; and although her modesty—the most incendiary of the female virtues—has been spared by the omnipotence of her husband, she blushes to herself at the tribute which she is compelled to pay to nature. To constrain her in this condition, to submit to conjugal caresses, is evidently to do violence to what

is most respectable in her nature ; it is to cast her down from her pedestal ; it is to rob her of the prestige which the graces of her sex assure to her. Love has need of poetry, and accommodates itself ill to the gross realities of the animal life. Do not seek to contradict such legitimate repugnance. The first step in this path infallibly leads to ruptures the most to be regretted.

“ But it is not only at the menstrual epoch that the wife should conceal from the husband the details of the lower necessities to which she, as well as he, is subject ; we would desire that she should endeavor never entirely to lay aside her natural charms of modesty and delicacy even in the intimacy of the bed-chamber. She will gain more than she can think in constancy and love—the most cruel enemies of which come from the destruction of the illusions and from satiety.

“ More than one married woman will find in these lines, if she discovers all their meaning, an explanation of the inexplicable weariness of her husband, and the solution of an unsolvable enigma to her *amour propre* ; that is to

say, the reason of the triumph of some rival, (perhaps less endowed in both body and mind), in the affections of her husband.

## CHAPTER X.

### CONJUGAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE OLD.

IT appears necessary before entering upon precepts, to determine the state which age impresses upon either sex, relative to the genital functions and the passions associated with them. This exposition, furthermore, seems entirely indispensable for the better understanding of what we have to say in the continuation of this chapter.

The faculty of procreation is extinguished in woman with menstruation. About the age of forty-five to fifty years the menstrual flux is suppressed, the breasts lose their fulness and the uterus loses its organic activity. The body itself does not long delay entering into decrepitude, and soon we see the woman—once so favored by nature when she was charged with the duty of reproducing her species—degraded to the level of a being who has no further duty to perform in the world. How-

ever, her family and society recompense her for the loss of her physical charms, by surrounding her with respect and heart-felt care, which are in remuneration for services which she has rendered to one and another in the past, by devoting herself to the cares of maternity. At this period of life, woman has eminently a need for the affection and protection of a husband, whose existence she has embellished. Culpable, indeed, are they who push ingratitude to indifference or to abandonment.

In woman, the transition from adult to old age is designated by the title of the "critical period," to designate the arrangements which coincide with this meno-pause. The organs of reproduction have no longer a special life, and departed, no longer excite the whole economy. Notwithstanding that the wife, always desirous of pleasing, exerts herself by all imaginary artifices, to preserve the charms that nature has still left, until, convinced of their powerlessness, she seeks a consolation in giving to her sentiments of affection a new direction.

In man, the prolific power persists for an undetermined period, but are always relative to the general constitutional force and the integrity of the general health. Generally a marked dimunition of the procreating power is observable about the fiftieth year, and this decrease continues to lessen until the age of seventy—the final period of the exercise of the genital sense—when it entirely disappears.

But if nature affixes an almost constant limit to the procreating faculty in both sexes; has it furnished for man as for woman, a certain sign to which one can recognise the destruction of the faculty?

This question has been treated at length by many writers on impotence and sterility.\*

The opinions which are current in the science of to-day, seemed for a long time in contradiction with the most authentic facts till within a few years. M. Duplay, in a treatise just come to hand, has sapped to its foundation this accredited doctrine.

\* FELIX ROULAUD. *Traité de l'impuissance et de la Sterilité chez l'homme and chez la femme.* Paris, 1855.

A. K. GARDNER. *Causes and Curative Treatment of Sterility.* New York: R. M. De Witt.

No one contests that, in the regular order of things, man arriving at a certain age loses the faculty of reproduction, from whence one might conclude that, since the fecundating property resides in the zoospermes, these ought to be wanting in old men; this is a logical deduction, but on the other hand, experience comes to confirm this opinion *à priori*, as is attested by the majority of modern physiologists, such as J. Muller, Kartzoeker, Longet, Geoffroy, etc. Still this doctrine and these experiences have, against theirs, an authority of great weight. "The venereal appetite," says Wagner, "diminishes in man, but the faculty of engendering seems to last during the entire life of those who enjoy good health. I have found spermatozoa in the testicles of very aged men, particularly in men of sixty or seventy years. Frequently there were none in the *vas deferens*, but in general the vesiculæ seminales contained them."\*

In the face of such contradictory assertions, M. Duplay brings the fruit of his researches,

\* WAGNER. *Histoire de la génération*, French translation, p. 14 and 31.

with the purpose of elucidating this question.

But as M. Rowland very judiciously remarks, "for superficial readers, the light brought by M. Duplay, far from clearing up this difficult problem, has only plunged it into deeper darkness; for, one may say, if the spermatic secretion is effected as normally in the old man as in the adult, and if the former has not any longer the power of procreating, this aptitude evidently does not reside in the composition of the sperm, or, more simply, in the presence of spermatozoa, and we must return to the opinion of Burdach, who considers these animalcules as an accessory fact, and as a concomitant phenomenon of this faculty, and not as the essential cause."

In fact, M. Duplay has found, as Wagner did, zoospermes in the semen of old men even to the age of eighty-six years.

We will now cite the conclusions from the labors of Duplay:

"Contrary to the opinion generally admitted by physiologists, the spermatozoa are found in the semen of old men. The opposite

opinion, far from being the rule, ought to be considered, from our researches, as the exception. If in certain cases, the spermatozoa are less numerous than in the adult, or less uniformly distributed than in the latter, throughout all the extent of the spermatic passages; if in certain cases they present a less perfect formation, in others also, and sometimes in very aged subjects, they are found with all the characteristics which are present during the middle period of life.

“ If old men are not more apt to reproduce themselves, which is most generally observed, and if, on the other hand, the presence of spermatozoa constitutes the fecundating quality of the seminal fluid, it is due less to the composition of their sperm than to other conditions of the reproductive act, to which must be attributed the unfruitfulness of the old.\*

But what are the other conditions which account for the sterility of old men? Roubaud thinks that he has discovered that the infecundity of advanced age belongs rather, in the

\* Duplay, *Archives generales de Medicine*. Dec. 1852, p. 403.

*majority of cases*, especially among those who possess normal spermatic animalcules to a notable diminution in the force with which the general fluid is emitted; and he reasons thus from the analogy with that which occurs in the worn-out adult, who becomes sterile from the same cause.

If we should now declare our opinion, as regards the entirely mechanical theory, we should say that we were in nowise satisfied, and that we prefer to admit some yet unknown modification in the sperm of the aged, which will some day clear up the reason of their inaptitude for reproduction.

Furthermore, we have before us many observations of women fecundated by individuals, who either from calculation or impotence had not projected their sperm very far or in large quantities; we believe, in a word, that in the mysterious act of the venereal impregnation, the elements of *quality* and force of projection play but a very secondary part, and that it is in another order of facts, otherwise raised, that we should seek for the conditions so capricious in appearance.

It may be asked if love survives in the man from that fortunate age when the fury of the passions finds a willing auxiliary in a young and robust organism. Evidently, yes. But it is no longer that tormenting love, that anguish, that despair, or that supreme happiness which make of life a heaven or a hell. The love of the old man is more calm, more reflective, and in consequence more tenacious. In youth, love betraycd may lead to the exaltation of delirium, and sometimes push on to suicide. In an advanced age, the victim allows himself to be slowly immolated, without complaint, but the deep emptiness which is suddenly made in a heart incapable of reaction, may sometimes bring on melancholy (lypemania) and even death by the gradual debilitation of the principal functions.

It is not the same in woman, with whom the faculty of love preserves all its empire, and sometimes its violence, even to a very advanced period of life. Let us listen on this subject to Réveillé Parise, the most charming writer of cotemporaneous medicine. "With women," he says, "this passion is equally modi-

fied by age, but not to the same extent as with men. That is why to love deeply is the key to woman. She loves as she lives, as she breathes. It seems as if nature gave her one necessity, love; one business, love; one duty, love; one recompense, love; and she remains faithful to this powerful instinct. In general, the life of a woman may be divided into three periods. In the first, she dreams of love; in the second, she makes it; in the third, she regrets it. Love occupies so much place in her life—absorbs so much of her time and her faculties—the charming ideal surrounding it is so powerful—that when she arrives at the age when she is compelled to renounce it, she thinks that she is but awaking after a prolonged dream, to perceive for the first time the truths and miseries of life. However, this love but changes its form and manifestation at this period. If, at a certain age, as we know, some women carry into the exchange of friendships a grace, a delicacy unknown to man, we should not be astonished to find that it is the remnants of love. Such is the origin of those attachments, full of charm, which still refine the maturity

of age, and which are nevertheless gilded by the last reflections of their youth. This faculty of loving, while it is preserved with time, changes its form and especially its object. ....

“Conjugal love, carried to a certain degree of exaltation, is one of the particular features of this sentiment in women. It is equally remarked in those endowed with imaginations of especial vivacity and extreme sensibility, who, at a certain age, fall into *mystical love* and religious melancholy.

“A last final remark upon this passion itself: It is that the influence of age is very much greater over the physiological love than over sentimental love, which has less necessity for physical force and juvenile exaltation. These love thoughts, this lava quenched by time, some one says, may preserve the remains of a heat revivifying to the mind. There are men always young in heart and imagination, who have a constant devotion for love, which, by prolongation, seem to re-illumine the vital principle instead of wasting it. Sometimes an attachment for women akin to love is remarked in certain old men of lively brain

Does not one, however, observe a striking difference between the manner of living in the young and in those of advanced age? It has been long known that *great follies* belong to first love and *great weaknesses* to the second.\*"

If love, sexual love, be it understood, can still torment the man, who, from his age, would seem to have a right, for the serenity of his latter days, to escape from its tortures, is it as common to see the virile power of the old man in a condition to respond to the solicitations of the heart? Unfortunately no; and the Ephemerides of science registers as rare exceptions the names of privileged ones in whom the power of reproduction is prolonged beyond the period indicated above as the normal term of that power.

Among the examples of amorous reminiscence in men aroused at the decline of life, there are some so authenticated by undoubted testimony that it is difficult to have any doubts regarding it. Here are some:

Begon, physician in Puy-en-Velay, cites the

\* Réveillé-Parise. *Traité de la vieillesse, hygiénique, medical et philosophique.* Paris, 1853, p. 137, et suiv.

case of a gentleman of the robe, of his time and country, who married at 75 years of age, *moved by a principle of conscience, and not able to resist the tardy but violent eruption of a temperament which excited him to love.*\*

An armorer of Montfauçon, aged 80 years, suddenly perceived his forces, which he had thought lost for ever, renewed within him, remarried, and created vigorous children.†

We find in a large collection of curious facts, one taken from the *Philosophical Transactions,*‡ of an Englishman named Thomas Parr, who died at 152 years of age, after having passed his entire life in great austerity. This man married at 120 years a widow, and for a long time after attended to his matrimonial duties with a punctuality which his companion was pleased to credit him with.

From the relation of Valerius Maximus Masinissa, king of Numidia, engendered Methynuate at 86 years of age.

Felix Plater affirms that his grandfather begot children until 100 years of age.§

\* *Memoires de Trévoux.* Novembre, 1708. † *Ibid.*

‡ *Transactions Philosophiques.* 1668.

§ *Anecdotes de Médecine.* T. II.

Here is a more rare observation which is found in the history of the Academy of Sciences.\* It is of a man in the diocese of Seez, who married at 94 years a woman of 83, whom he had made pregnant. She was confined at full time with a boy.

The authenticity of this fact is undeniable. Monseigneur the Bishop of Seez made it the subject of a communication to the Academy.

The genital functions, at all ages, are the cause of diseases, from the little judgment which is generally exercised in their usage; but what is remarkable, is that old men, who now, are no longer ruled by the storms of passion, do not, more than the young, know how to resist the attractions of the perilous joys of love. And what is still more deplorable is, that it is the very ones who have abused their youth who continue the same excesses in their old age.

The dangers of sexual relations in advanced age proceed from two causes; from the loss of sperm and from the nervous excitement which accompanies coitus. For the

\* *Memoires de l'Academie des Sciences.* 1710.

sperm is the purest extract of the blood, and, according to the expression of Fernel, *totus homo semen est.* Nature in creating it has intended it not only to communicate life, but also to nourish the individual life. In fact, the re-absorption of the fecundating liquid impresses upon the entire economy an entirely new energy and a virility which contributes to the prolongation of life. As to the enervation which follows the cynical spasms, it is unnecessary to insist upon their disastrous consequences at a period when the vital energies are more or less deficient.

Réveillé-Parise, in his *Traité de la Vieillesse*, enumerates at length the causes of the disorders which old men bring upon themselves to the great injury of their longevity. We cannot resist the temptation to reproduce some of the eloquent pages which the sagacious observer has written upon this subject.

“One of the first causes of this infraction of the true principle of hygiene, is that the man, still in green old age, refuses for a long time to believe that he is so. His souvenirs, almost synonymous with regret, are always in his me-

mory and his heart to torment him. Without cessation he turns his eyes backwards to contemplate in the distant horizon the promised land of love and pleasure where it would be sweet to live, could he but remain there. With difficulty he becomes accustomed to the idea that the high prerogative of procreation is almost departed from him, and he does not wish to avow to himself, till as late as possible, the condition of decadence, with which nature has smitten him. This new existence seems an injury and shame, for there are few individuals capable of accepting old age without weakness of mind and affection of the reason. Some whiten their heads without disenchanting their minds. Furthermore, a man, well constituted, one that age has not broken down, still feels perfidious and seducing reminiscences; everything appears young to him except the date of his birth. His years have fled, but not his strength. He, indeed, admits that the spurs of necessity are not so pressing as formerly, that he no longer feels that *excess of life*, that fire, that ardor, that formerly warmed his blood and heart, but he does not consider

himself an athlete entirely disarmed, so that he cannot renew his combat, and as Fenelon says, "the young man is not yet dead in him." Many old fools, crazy heads full of years, will here recognise themselves. I only ask them to be sincere. Are not the attempts of these superannuated dolts degrading, their failure in love contemptible? Sometimes the evil is deeply rooted in their habits, and as a thinker of our day has said, *the chastisement of those who have loved women too much, is to love them for ever.* These are only reiterated defeats, formidable diseases, the halting and precipitate walk of old age, which finally teach the imprudent, that which he ought long before to have learned; that well-being and health consist, especially in the latter part of life, in the proper accord of the remains of strength with tried judgment and a wise conduct.

Still another motive equally urges some old men to dangerous excesses, and this is the example of certain men who really, or in appearance, preserve the faculties which age usually snatches away. So they refer to them, and cite these cases with complacency,

with a sort of interior satisfaction, always disposed to be self-considered as belonging to this category of the predestinated.

Thus the Marshal d' Estrée made his third wedding at the age of ninety-one, and married, as they said, *very seriously*. The Duc de Lazun lived for a long time after having committed excesses of every sort. The Marshal de Richelieu married a second time, to Madame de Roth, at the age of eighty-four years.

Then how can we believe what Bacon says, that "the debauches of youth are conspiracies against old age," and that "one pays dearly in the evening for the follies of the morning!" We see that it was not always so, and the lively old man who thinks himself so rejuvenated by some desires hidden under the ashes, is delighted to instance himself among such examples. However, what signifies such isolated and assuredly very rare facts! Is it necessary to guide himself by such examples, unless, indeed, he has received from nature one of these exceptional constitutions, whose erotic salacity does not finish but with life? This, indeed, would be a fatal error.

Besides the numberless ills which the old man prepares for himself by inconsiderate indulgence in his sexual pleasures, he should know that sudden death is sometimes the immediate consequence of the act of copulation, from cerebral hæmorrhage or rupture of the large vessels. These catastrophes are here produced, as in the course of all violent and disordered emotions which accelerate the contractions of the heart, or in the middle of a considerable effort, which cause a more or less complete suspension of the respiration.

But if it is now asked of us, where is the exact limit at which it is important to abstain, we shall be unable to reply in a categorical manner. That which it is especially necessary in this case to take into consideration, is the peculiar constitution of each individual, and the preceding drain upon his forces from his relations with the other sex. The Abbé Maury said of his friend Portal, "I hold as certain, that after fifty years of age, a man of sense ought to renounce the pleasures of love. Each time that he allows himself this gratification, is *a scellet of earth thrown upon his coffin.*"

This is a maxim of the greatest wisdom and we recommend it to our readers, at the risk of not being heard.

As we do not write here but for old men engaged in the bonds of marriage, we have not occupied ourselves with the voluptuous wanderings to which, in large cities, these decayed Lovelaces, whom celibacy has long perverted, abandon themselves.

The most dangerous of these manœuvres is, without contradiction, the variety which they seek as the object of their immediate amours. It is, in fact, the surest method of awaking the worn-out senses.

Confinement to the conjugal bed keeps dangerous excesses at a distance, and if we are obliged to preach moderation to spouses arrived at the decline of life, at least, we need not warn them against factitious excitements to which they are not already accustomed.

In a moral point of view, continence in the old is perhaps still more imperiously demanded. In this relation let us recall the judicious reflections of the author already cited: "When you see an old man of ripe

judgment, endowed with strong reason, whose bright active mind is still able to direct his business, and to be useful to society, be convinced that this man is wise and continent, and that temperance—so justly among the ancients called Sophrosne, guardian of wisdom—has, in him, a fervent worshipper."

By this, has he not acquired complete moral liberty? Has he not thrown off a violent tyranny? This was Cicero's opinion. "Behold," says he, "a wise answer of Sophocles, from whom some one demanded, if being old, he still enjoyed the pleasures of love. *"May the gods preserve me,"* said he; *"I have quitted them as willingly as I would have quitted a savage and furious master."* Truly a man who has accepted his lot with such a clear and firm manner, shows a very remarkable moral vigor. Furthermore, we must say, this man did but follow the indications of nature.

However, it may be, the imitators of Sophocles will not be the less worthy of praise, so little in this respect are men generally disposed to the least sacrifice. You must however reconcile yourself to it, you whom

old age presses upon, and by which you are already affected. You desire to live as long as possible and with the least possible pain ; difficult solution of the great problem of existence. Well, renounce that which does not comport with your age, with your temperament, your strength ; accept from age, peace, repose, wisdom, in exchange for the transports and fires of love. Know, moreover, that to quit before absolute incapability, is in all respects an essential article in the Hygienic Code of the old.\*

\* Réveillé Parise, loc cit. p. 431. etc.

## CHAPTER XI.

### MARRIAGE BETWEEN OLD MEN AND YOUNG GIRLS.

ALLIANCES of this sort have taken place in every epoch of humanity, from the time of the patriarchs to the present day—alliances which are repugnant to nature—between men bordering on decrepitude and poor young girls, who are sacrificed by their parents for position, or who sell themselves for gold. There is in these monstrous alliances something which we know not how to brand sufficiently energetically, in considering the reciprocal relations of the pair thus wrongfully united and the lot of the children which may result from them. Let us admit, for an instant, that the marriage has been concluded with the full consent of the young girl, and that no external pressure has been exerted upon her will—as is generally the rule—it will none the less happen that reflection and experience will tardily bring regrets, and the sharper as the evil will

be without remedy; but if compulsion, or what is often the same thing, *persuasion*, had been employed to obtain the consent which the law demands, the result would have been more prompt and vehement. From this moment the common life becomes odious to the unhappy victim, and *culpable hopes* will arise in her desolate heart, so heavy will weigh the chain that she carries. In fact, the love of the old man becomes ridiculous and horrid to her, and we cannot sufficiently sympathize with the unfortunate person whose duty it is to submit to it. If we think of it an instant, we shall perceive a repulsion such as is only inspired by the idea of incest. In reality, everything is in contrast, physically and morally; and chastity is necessarily absent in intercourses where the brutality of the act is not blunted and poetized in some manner by the passionate overflowings of the heart. So what do we oftenest observe? Either the woman violently breaks the cursed bonds, or she resigns herself to them; and then she seeks to fill up the void in her soul by adulterous amours. Such is the sombre perspective of the sacrilegious

unions which set at defiance the most respectable instincts, the most noble desires, and the most legitimate hopes. Such, too, are the terrible chastisements reserved for the thoughtlessness or foolish pride of these dissolute grey-beards, who prodigalize the last breath of their life in search of depraved voluptuousness.

Let us turn now from the dangers that we have sufficiently exposed in the preceding chapters, and which are inherent to the exercise of the genital sense in advanced age. These dangers exist only for the man, as is easy to imagine; but they are all the more dangerous as the young bride is more or less capable of over-exciting the sexual appetites by her graces, freshness and other attractions with which she may be endowed. Unfortunate is the imprudent man who dares to drink without care from this cup of delight. Nature knows how, in such a case, to punish cruelly any infraction of her laws.

One of the kings of ancient Germany, arrived at advanced age, was counselled to marry again, and to a beautiful maiden, advice

which he firmly declined, saying that "it was the pleasantest form of suicide."

*A young smile for a grey beard* is a proverb which reveals the corruption of manners and the infamous stuprations which makes the nuptial couch a den of debauch, a thousand times more desppicable than the foulest brothel.

The products of old age are generally caco-chynes, weakly and by predilection especially subject to attacks of every morbific agent.

The cause of this fact is complex, and is found in the abnormal condition of the sperm at an advanced period of life; in the general prostration of the father, and doubtless also in the small part taken by the wife in the genitaic act. Finally, the disproportion in the ages of the parties united, which we have seen to exert an incontestable influence upon procreation, finishes the explanation of the vitiation of the productions of old age.

Whatever it may be, every one has been able to make the observation, a more or less considerable number of times, that children, the issue of old men, are habitually marked by a serious and sad air spread over their coun-

tenances, which is manifestly very opposite to the infantile expression which so delights one in the little children of the same age, engendered under other conditions. As they grow up, their features take on more and more the senile character, so much so that every one remarks it, and the world regards it as a natural thing. The old mothers pretend that it is an old head on young shoulders. They predict an early death to these children, and the event frequently justifies the horoscope. Our attention has for many years been fixed upon this point, and we can affirm that the greater part of the offspring of this connection are weak, torpid, lymphatic, if not scrofulous, and do not promise a long career. To statistics, collected on a large scale, is reserved the task of throwing light upon this interesting problem. We strongly urge expert laborers to engage in this research.\*

\* In this study, the work of Dr. Morel may be consulted with great interest, entitled "Des dégénérescences physiques, intellectuelles et morales de l'espèce humaine. Paris, 1857.

## CHAPTER XII.

### WHAT MAY BE DONE, WITH HEALTH IN VIEW, AND THE FEAR OF GOD BEFORE US.

IN the foregoing chapters we have, as fully and as minutely as was judged necessary for the elucidation of the subject under consideration, considered the physical relations of the sexes. If some of my readers think that the explanations are not sufficiently explicit, or that some of the statements are made too vaguely and obscurely, they will please to remember the circumstances under which the work has been written, and especially the delicacy necessary in treating subjects of this nature. Verbiage has been sometimes expressly selected instead of distinct statements, and a round-about sentence has often been used as the substitute for an expression which might offend sensitive minds. Especial care, it will be observed, has been used not to admit anything which might minister to the depraved appetites of the prurient-mind-

ed, and, above all, not to make any statements of facts, with such details, as might be perverted from their intended purpose to serve unworthy or improper ends.

We have shown that the females in the refined circles of the present day are brought up from the cradle in an improper manner; that they are hurried from childhood into womanhood; from adolescence into maternity with no middle period, no halting term, where, during a season of quiet, the constitution might gather strength for the coming changes in her physical being and the new duties which there may devolve upon her. We have shown that, from a false idea of its innocuousness, after entering into the holy (?) bonds of matrimony, they are persistently and continually endeavoring, by every means in their power, to avoid the great object of married life—an object which was the special design of Providence in creating the sexes—love, parental feeling, and all the higher and nobler emotions of the soul—the begetting of children; that the various means they have adopted are all mentally and mor-

ally injurious to both the parties engaged ; that some of them are especially injurious to the physical natures of the two—yes, to the three persons whose welfare is implicated in the matter—and that much of the nervous, hysterical, worn-out and good-for-nothing character of the women of the higher classes to-day is owing to their practicing this thoughtless, ignorant sin against the laws of life and health.

We have shown that, if a deeper sin exists in the world than infanticide—infant murder, in plainer terms—that sin has yet to be made known to us. Murder in itself has no parallel in the catalogue of crimes. The taking away of what we cannot restore ; the destruction of what is beyond human power to atone for ; the sacrifice of human life—God and nature and human laws have all punished with the greatest severity, and reprobated as the most heinous of sins. We find, too, the laws and human nature acknowledging even a higher crime—where the victim has some peculiar relationship to the guilty murderer—the killing of one whom it is our duty

to honor and cherish, a parent or a near relation.

Under other circumstances, it could scarcely be credited that there might be a possible aggravation of this wickedness. Yet it is so. Some parents are so unlovely in their characters, so harsh and cruel in their natures, that the natural feelings and affections become crushed out of their children's bosoms, and the aggravated character of their murder may be but a matter of seeming. But she who murders the innocent consequence of an unholy love, or the unconscious, legitimate result of the God-ordained institution of marriage for no stronger reason than fashion, love of ease, the hope of retaining the fleeting charms of person a few years longer—she who murders the tenant of an immortal soul against whom no greater crime than existence can be alleged—a child whose birth, perhaps, has been looked forward to for many generations; who has been prayed for to succeed to a long line of noble ancestry; whose coming was the child's dream of the once-innocent mother as she prattled o'er her playthings and

hugged her toy-image to her bosom—*she* has found a deeper depth of sin. God grant that when upon her death-bed—robed in lace and covered with silken damask, with no child to wipe the death-sweat from her clammy brow—she may have no deeper sorrow than the thought that she had bartered away her natural affection for worldly wealth, a child's love for gems, a birthright for a mess of pottage!

Still we cannot but remember that we live in the world, in this nineteenth century of luxury, extravagance and necessities—that God has implanted in our breasts our natural appetites, which, in spite of ourselves, do become irresistible passions. The problem is to reconcile these together.

To do this, I think, has little difficulty attending it. Let that principle, which should be the guiding one of life, direct in this as in all other actions. **Do right.** Put away all expediencies. Tamper not either with your consciences, with your bodies or your health; perform the duties of life boldly and manfully, and confidently and submissively accept the results. You have no right “to take

precautions," or, failing in this, to resort to murder. Are fashion and dress and luxury and ease better than the serenity of a quiet conscience; better than the joys arising from the love of fond children; better than the most delicious of all pleasures—that of toiling for those we love?

How dearly the immunity sought for—a scant family—is obtained? We have shown already that the attempts to thwart nature of her rights are full of peril to the physical nature of both sexes. Death is not uncommonly an immediate result. Decay and debility, followed by weary days and nights of languishing on beds of sickness, are the penalties which many pay for these transgressions against God's holy laws. But who shall describe the sorrow of the heart which comes home to those who, having by violent means, limited the number of their children, when they find the two, which were "all they wished for," taken away from them, and it is too late to hope for more?—Can it know any bounds?

We have shown that we can "DO RIGHT" without prejudice to health by the exercise of

continence. Self-restraint, the ruling of the passions, is a virtue, and is within the power of all well-regulated minds. Nor is this necessarily perpetual or absolute. The passions may be restrained within proper limitations. He who indulges in lascivious thoughts may stimulate himself to frenzy; but if his mind were under proper control he would find other employment for it, and his body, obedient to its potent sway, would not become the master of the man.

Menstruation in woman indicates an aptitude for impregnation, and this condition remains for a period of six or eight days after the entire completion of the flow. During this time only, can most women conceive. Allow twelve days for the onset of the menses to pass by and the probabilities of impregnation are very slight. This act of continence is healthy, moral and irreproachable. Then there need be no imperfection in the conjugal act, no fear, no shame, no disgust, no drawback to the joys which legitimately belong to a true married life. Thus excess is avoided, disease diminished, and such a desirable limitation to the

number of children, as is consistent with the peculiar nature of the individuals concerned, is effected.

On this point Mayer makes the following statement resulting from the researches of the celebrated physiologist, Prof. Pouchet, of Rouen, a view generally received by the profession of the present day.

“ 1st. Fecundation holds a permanent relationship to menstruation.

“ 2d. That in the human race, it is easy to mark distinctly the intermenstrual period, when conception is physically impossible, as well as the period when it is possible.\*

To establish this law, the author relies upon experimental data, which we will here relate.

“ It is generally admitted that the ovules of mammals are emitted at fixed epochs, in relationship with the super-excitation of the sexual apparatus, and that this super-excitation corresponds to the menstruation of women ;

\* Pouchet, *Théorie positive de l'ovulation spontanée et de la fécondation des mammifères et l'espèce humaine basée sur l'observation de toute la série animale*, p. 270. Paris, 1847.

consequently, we must also recognize that ovulation in the human species is subordinate to the catamenial function, and that it is possible to carefully mark the period.

“On the other hand, it is incontestable,

“1st. That the Graafian vesicles in woman do not emit their eggs, except at the cessation of the menstrual flow, say immediately after, or one, two, three, or even four days later, and,

“2d. That from two to six days are occupied in the passage through the fallopian tubes, from the ovary to the uterus. If this egg has met in its passage through these tubes with some molecules of seminal fluid; and if, in consequence, it is fecundated, it will remain in the womb and be there developed. In the contrary case, after having remained a certain time, it is finally expelled with the *decidua* (an ephemeral membrane exuded upon the internal surface of the uterus toward the decline of the irritation which follows the catamenial period); this carries it away in its escape or it is again absorbed, which (imperceptibly) occurs ten or twelve days after the cessation of the menstrual flow.

But, as no eggs are produced at any other epoch, conception evidently cannot take place, except during the first days following menstruation, and before the escape of the *decidua*; after this, fecundation is materially impossible. The egg has disappeared.

“ This phenomenon has been recognized from the most remote period, and physiologists, as well as accoucheurs, agreed in considering the first days following the menstrual period as particularly favorable for conception; the father of medicine created it into a precept for sterile women to seek to have connection during the days immediately following these periods; but it was reserved for our age to determine a fact vaguely suspected, and to establish it upon scientific proofs.

“ However, it may be objected that the impregnation of the ovule could be effected at some other moment than that of the union of the sexes; that it might suffice for this egg to meet, in its peregrinations through the organs, some portion of seminal fluid to be fecundated; but let us inquire under what circumstances this could be effected, and under what

conditions the phenomenon would be impossible.

“ We will recur to the manner in which this phenomenon is effected.

“ The Graafian vesicle which should emit the egg, is developed during the course of the menstrual epoch. Then either immediately, or in the course of from one to four days after its termination, this vesicle opens and allows the egg which it contains to escape. Then the egg, seized by its fimbriated extremity penetrates into the tube, through which it slowly passes, until it arrives in the womb, which occupies from two to six days.

“ Arrived in the womb, the egg is there retained from two to six days by the *decidua* of which we have already spoken. If it is not then impregnated by the sperm, it does not become attached, and is carried away with the *decidua*, which falls from the tenth to the twelfth day from the cessation of the courses. Consequently, it is necessary that the impregnation of the ovule should result from molecules of sperm proceeding from a coitus one or two days anterior, for it is demonstrated that this

liquid preserves its fecundating properties more than thirty hours, while a sexual relation, effected after the simultaneous escape of the *decidua* and the egg, and during any of the time which separates this escape from the commencement of a new menstrual period, is absolutely and necessarily unfruitful."

This statement of Mayer's is a trifle too positive. Within a month I have attended a lady in confinement, a pregnancy resulting from a sexual intercourse, the only one for several weeks. Menstruation appeared three days after the coitus, and lasted for several days, but with more irregularity than usual, showing that pregnancy had already taken place. The child was born 283 days after the coitus, showing that the vitality of the seminal fluid in this case lived, for at least three days, and also showing that the period of positive impossibility of pregnancy is somewhat shorter than stated, and that a limit of some days is necessary before the time of expected pregnancy—in vigorous people—for positive immunity.

"It might also be added that it is likewise impossible during the continuance of the sanguine

flow, because the egg does not generally come into the uterus, as we have seen above, till some days after the cessation of the menstrual flow. There remains, therefore, eight days in the month—from the fourth to the twelfth—after the cessation of the flow, during which the sexual relations are liable to be fruitful.

“ It is to the knowledge of this fact, that history attributes the advice given by Fernel to Henry II., who remaining childless after eleven years’ marriage, by confining himself to the recommendations of his physician, finally had connection with his wife, Catherine de Medicis, at the proper time, and she subsequently became a mother several times.”

“ Booérhaave had already said, *Feminae semper concipiunt post ultima menstrua et vix ullo alio tempore.*

“ Haller, Burdach and many others have given the same opinion.

“ Finally, the most recent experiments undertaken to solve this problem, so eminently interesting, agree in sanctioning the discovery of this inter-menstrual period, as propitious for

fecundation in woman and the majority of female mammals.

“ It therefore naturally follows that *moral restraint* may be limited to this period of time, which, moreover, will render it easier to observe.

“ Any exceptions that may be noted to this rule are few in number, and may perhaps be ascribed to some error or carelessness of the parties concerned.”

The character, both physical and mental, of our children is also a matter of great importance, and not a little under our control. To what extent we may affect the minds and constitutions of our offspring is not exactly known, but we do know, that children begotten by men of general good habits, who may be at this particular time much affected by intoxicating drink, do inherit marked evidences of its consequences in their dispositions. Curious and wonderful as it is, we do know that parents, much interested in some great excitement, do impregnate their children with decided evidences of this state of mind. The general enthusiasm attendant upon Jenny

Lind's musical tour in this country, did, to my own knowledge, markedly affect the children generated by parents full of the musical fervor of that period, and these children are now all over our country, developing a musical taste very uncommon before in this land.

Could we study the public mind and be enabled to trace its effects in families, we should doubtless find most wonderful corroborative proofs of this opinion.

One practical result from this theory may be effected. Parents may exercise proper judgment in this as in other duties of life. They may sedulously avoid connections at those periods when procreation is a probable or even possible result, at times of physical debility, when recovering from disease, worn by business cares, gloomy and despondent, oppressed by grief, and especially when affected by any disease hereditary in its nature and entailing misery on its possessor. A writer, to whom we have before referred, goes still further; he says: "For the most part children of consumptive tendencies are begotten under circumstances in which one of the strongest, most

powerful and most invigorating influences is absent. I mean sun-light. Most children are begotten when the parents are not only fatigued, but in the night-time, when the parties are in bed, covered up with clothing and so related to each other as to have about every abnormal condition in their frames in full or superabundant exercise. There can be no wider departure from the law of health in regard to the propagation of offspring, in respect to their constitutional relations to life, than to beget them when proper electrical conditions are wanting. . . . Under this view, benefit may be derived from analogy, if we are only observant, and brave enough to make use of it. Of all the domestic animals which rise to a rank to make them particularly valuable, there is not one whose habit it is to copulate at any other time than by day. If left to themselves, they are sure to have this function in active exercise when the sun is up in the heaven, so as to furnish electric states of body. Nature takes care of this instinct, and guards it with great vigilance; and for the double reason, that they may have the

largest measure of excitement in and for the occasion, and that they may be in the best possible vigor to perform this act, whenever it is needful for the propagation of their kind. What nature does by instinct for the lower animals, we ought to be able to see the fitness of, when, in addition to our own instincts, we have the aid of reason."\*

We find some individuals, few indeed, we fear, using good judgment in entering upon marital relations. They select their wives from a healthy stock, from families of high mental endowments, or more frequently of superior physical excellence. They calculate in advance upon the probabilities of the character and appearance of the offspring to issue from such a combination of stocks, and then with strange folly they destroy all the possibility of a successful result of this well-planned scheme, by procreating children in improper states of mind or body. An artist refuses "to make a palette" when not in the mood for painting. The poet declares that

\* James C. Jackson, M. D. Consumption, how to prevent it. Boston, 1862.

his verses depend upon inspiration. The musician awaits a peculiar frame of mind requisite for those divine harmonies which are to touch the heart of future centuries. Yet these same individuals consider that they can impart a portion of their own vigorous constitutions to a future generation, when they are themselves weak and enervated, and wanting temporarily perhaps, in self-control, in both mental and physical vigor, from over stimulation by drink. If they should perpetuate a likeness of themselves as they appear at that very moment, would they be proud of the result?

Unfortunately strong drinks give great stimulus to the animal instincts, but the wife should, as a moral and responsible being, refuse to lend herself to the wishes of her drunken husband, when there is reasonable probability of a procreative result.

Can either expect to impart a sunshiny, happy disposition to their future child, when this generative act is entered upon while despondent from business trials, or when in any grief at any affliction, or during one of those

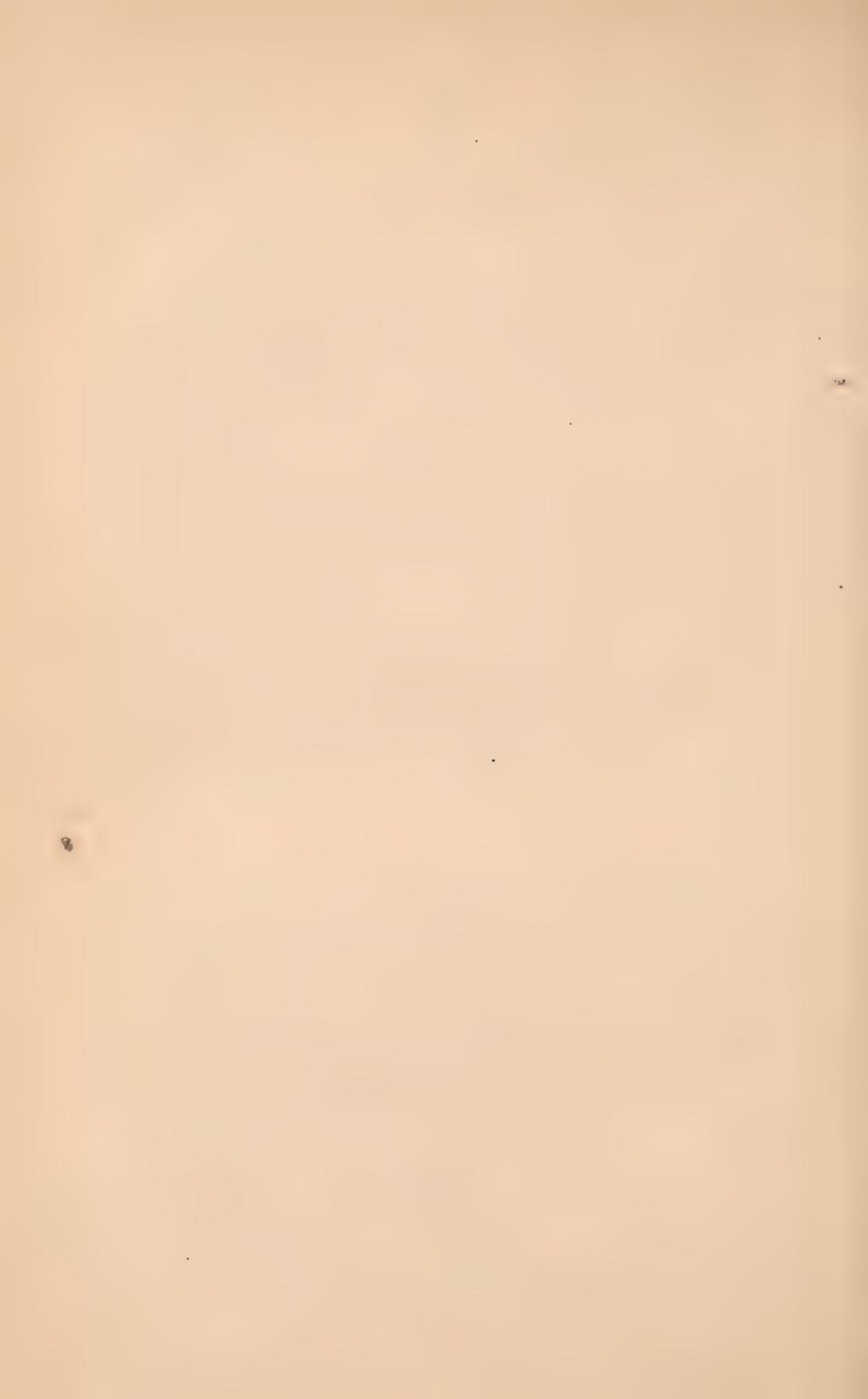
matrimonial quarrels, sometimes seen even in the best regulated families. Mothers imagine that a sudden mental shock will so alter the quality of their milk as to affect their offspring; and we have many recorded instances of children being thrown into convulsions from nursing from such perturbed bosoms. Is it unreasonable to think, then, that a child generated at such a time should inherit some of the moody, ungovernable tempers that have raged in the breasts of his immediate progenitors?

No, it may be that the external light of heaven, or the mild influence of the moon, or the sweet effluence of the stars, may little affect the natures of those born under their sway, but sure it is, that the sun-light in the heart of the parents at this time will brighten and irradiate the nature, and consequently beneficially influence the future of coming generations.

Throughout all nature the great aim and object of life seems to be the perpetuation of itself, and the heart of all thinking life in its various forms of utterance asserts that "there is something holy in maternity."

Shall man, the great master of all, shirk this coequal and coexistent duty? Shall the powers of intellect superadded to the highest attributes of animal life, be only employed in opposing the laws of God and the instincts of our divine natures? Let us hope that our present high state of civilization will not repeat the iniquities perpetrated in the corresponding Golden Age of barbarism, of which we read in our school books, *Roma fuit*, lest we may have inscribed, upon our national ruin, for succeeding races to read in the obsolete tongue of a forgotten people,

AMERICA WAS !



## APPENDIX.



## APPENDIX.

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### A.

#### PHYSICAL DECLINE OF AMERICAN WOMEN.

(From the Knickerbocker Magazine.)

IN the present article we shall depart from the beaten track worn by the measured feet of fervid orators never weary in praising the charms of lovely woman, her grace of form, her springing step, her glowing cheek, her sparkling eye, her sweet smile irradiating every action. We shall leave poetry for fact, and shall forget woman as she was ; and in no sounding periods shall attempt to tell why woman, instead of being as above described, is a haggard creature, dull-eyed and sallow, pinched in form, an unfit mother, not a helpmeet, but a drag on the energy, spirits and resolution of her partner in life. We shall not attempt to consider woman as an angel, and to solve the great *questio vexata*, “ why she was born with-

out wings." We shall not even consider her in her æsthetic and intellectual sphere, but in the most ungallant manner we shall class her among ichthysauri and pachydermata, among bovine and feline, among milleped, polyped and quadruped, and proceed to hold her up for inspection as a simple biped, an animal, and shall then leave the theme for individual reflection.

Our theme, then, is the "Causes of the Present Physical Decline of Woman." We read in the Old Testament, in the fifth chapter of Genesis, "In the days that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him—male and female created He them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created." With the exception of the biblical account of the construction of woman out of the rib of Adam, taken from him when asleep—certainly not easily to be comprehended in its full meaning—we have no statement respecting the early character of woman. "Male and female created He them," does not imply that any physical difference existed between the sexes as regards strength, endurance or capacity, either bodily

or mentally. We surely cannot infer that any such difference should or does exist naturally. True, indeed, it is, that in man and many animals, birds, and perhaps other specimens of animated life, the male is larger than the female, but in proportion to its size we do not recognize any diversity of physical force. In the want of any statement to that effect respecting man, we have undoubtedly a just right to reason by analogy, and we can find no lack of comparative vigor in the sexes of any animals. The lioness, the tigress, the female bear, etc., are in no wise inferior in vigor to the male, save as they may or not be different in size. The cow is, in many lands, worked like the ox, with no marked contrast when of equal size and weight. The mare is not judged one whit less muscular or robust than the horse. Why, then, is it that the woman is physically inferior to the man?

To this we answer, she is not inferior, naturally. We will prove this by the females of past days, by the women of Jerusalem, Rome, Greece, concerning whom history gives us abundant details respecting their life, manners,

dress and the like. Is it possible that where these matters are spoken of with so much minuteness, by so astute a sanitary lawgiver as Moses, by so thoroughly educated physicians as Hippocrates or Galen, such philosophers as Aristotle and Pliny, any such difference would have been forgotten? Is it probable that Sophocles, Euripides, Catullus, Juvenal, Ovid and other painters of the domestic manners of their times, should have neglected such great diversities in the physical capacities of the sexes, as we now observe, if they actually existed?

Neither do we find any such record of the physical inferiority of woman to her lord and master recorded in the writings of later days. Pope—who loved to have his fling at the pampered women of the court and the licentious women of the town, no more than the writers of any other stamp of the same period—makes no charges of a natural weakness of the animal woman. No record of this kind is made by the historians of the colonists of the various settlements in America, whether Dutch, English, French or Spanish.

Finally, the Indian woman of this country, when unexposed to the damning influences of civilization upon the animal economy, is, *pari passu*, equal to the man, enduring cold, hardships and more labor than the man with equal results. Dr. Livingstone, in his travels in South Africa, while he recognizes the existence of female diseases among the women, does not note any physical inferiority of the women to the men. I am also informed by gentlemen of extensive experience among the slaves of the South, that the muscular vigor of the men and women among the field-hands is not markedly different, unless when abused while carrying children, or being forced to hard work too speedily after their lying-in.

Now, what is the recognizable difference in the lot of woman from the past to the present, between the savage and the civilized? Her lot is said to be ameliorated. From being considered a pet and inferior to man, she is now considered a pet and equal to man. As a pet, she is carefully guarded and not allowed to do anything, so far as this is possible. The rich being able to effect this end, their women

are all sick—the poor, comparatively so. The whole sex are being killed by kindness.

Let us take the actual condition of the rich children of different sexes in this city of New York, and looking at them, let us see if there is any wonder that they are sickly, miserable, and inferior in physical force to what they should be, and why it is that the female is constantly, after she can walk alone, far below the male even in his imperfect physical development.

So long as children are infants, wearing the same dress, their exposures are the same, but as soon as the boy leaves his cumbersome garments, the swaddling-clothes, which must be kept "fit to be seen," the distinction begins. The right of woman "to be free and equal" with man will come with a Declaration of Independence which shall strip off the fetters of petticoats and the gilded meshes of lace which have so long bound down the gentler sex.

For a short period the rich boy is little benefited by the change of attire. The shape of his garments, does, indeed, give liberty to the limbs and play to the muscles, but the ex-

igencies of rich velvet jackets, silken trowsers and white shirts, with their lace "*fretwork*" of frills and furbelows, require him to be constantly guarded, and the natural ebullitions of his animal life are restrained by imported bog-trotters, educated to know what dirt is, or by a more fashionable *bonne d'enfant*, who unites to her duties instruction in the freedom of Parisian morals with the restraints of French manners.

Soon the American boy is beyond the demoralizing influences of Hyperion curls which have so long fed the sickly vanity of his enervated mother. His velvet cap, which he so recklessly offered to his friends to be "pegged at" with tops, has given place to one of meaner stuff, and in games of ball, tag and the like, he neither "respects his cloth" himself, nor exacts regard for it from others. Witness the impetuosity with which those boys, in yonder retired street, rush in friendly strife after the "shinny ball;" hear their full-mouthed cry! Does not the air permeate the lungs to their farthest cranny, leaving no portion of their tissue full of stagnant blood? Are not the

pores of their skins opened to the free out-pouring of the waste of the body? No matter if the foolish parents stuff their stomachs with improper food, if nature can thus have a full opportunity to get rid of it.

We may speedily follow the boy in his career through life, and while we find him free from the bad effects of tobacco and alcoholic stimulants, engaged in out-of-door exercise, even while breathing the air of a city thronged by near a million souls, and most imperfectly attended to by the authorities in its sanitary matters, yet we find the man comparatively vigorous. Debility and disease commence with the boy confined over his book in ill-ventilated school-rooms, neglecting healthy exercise for the ambition of literary superiority; or, in our own city, most frequently bent over a ledger. It is worthy of note, that there is scarcely a single well-ventilated private counting-room in New York, and most of the bank-rooms are little better. The New York merchant changes his badly heated house for his worse heated counting-room, not by the healthy walk from one to

the other, but by the locomotion of a crowded, shut-up omnibus or car. Is it strange that the health of the business-men of this city is deteriorating; that gout, dyspepsia and all chronic diseases, in addition to consumptions, erroneously supposed to be the only malady engendered by want of exercise and bad air, are greatly on the increase?

But although the physical stamina of the men is not what it might be, it is far superior to that of the women, to whom we will again turn. We will start with the girl who has kept pace with her brother until the date of his assumption of breeches and their inalienable privileges. We feel that we are treating upon a delicate subject, and we beg our readers to attend to the general idea, rather than to any peculiar form of expression, or to any particular illustration, about which there may be more than one opinion.

So soon as the sex of the child is made evident by any outward manifestation or dress, so soon does the bodily degeneracy commence. The child is then considered as an ornament, in the present or the future. The respect-

ability of the mother is dependent upon the immaculate purity of its worked pantalettes and under-clothing—no mud-pies for you, my dear, after this. “Julia, my dear, or Julia, you awful freckle-face, you *must* put on your flat, and be sure and keep out of the sun”—that is, go into the damp shade till you grow up like a potato-sprout in the cellar, white and semi-vitalized. “But, Julia, I see the wind is blowing. Wind is horrible for freckles; you can’t go out to-day.” To-morrow it is, “Clementina Angelica, it is too damp for you to go out.” “But, mother, George is out playing!” “Yes, George is a great boy.”

Soon Julia and Clementina Angelica go to a fashionable boarding-school, where they learn to play a polka, or crochet and the like; and for health, walk up and down Broadway twice a week in a procession, the principal use of which is its serving as an advertisement of Madame X—’s school.

Look at the dress of woman. Were man to so direct the fashion of woman’s dress, in order to enable him, by physical force, to overcome her and tyrannize over her, he could not

more completely fetter her than she shackles herself. Her sleeves are placed so low down upon the waist that she is unable to raise her hands to the top of her head, or use them freely in any direction ; her limbs are restrained in their motions by a profusion of flowing skirts, and her breathing interrupted by lacings or corsets, which displace the organs and slowly destroy life. It is in vain, however, to hope for any relief from the tyranny of fashion. Were these injuries caused by any edict of church or state, long ere this they would have been abrogated. Against the decrees of fashion there is no appeal. We must, therefore, seek for other evils more curable.

Hudibras well said of men, what is especially applicable to women of the present time, in their attention to matters of health ; they

“ Compound for sins they are inclined to  
By damning those they have no mind to.”

They say that the reason of their condition is, that they are the ills consequent upon maternity ; that it is the formation of the modern houses ; that they are compelled to go up too

many flights of stairs; that they are heated with furnaces, etc. They say nothing of late hours, late suppers, improper clothing at parties and public places, of the bad results from the modern dances, or the want of vigorous out-of-door exercise, of ill-ventilated churches, lecture-rooms, ball-rooms, theatres. We will look at their reasons and those just given.

The ills of maternity are great. The curse has come down to the present generation. But why is it magnified during the last half century? Because woman has become a doll, to be decked and draped, and carried out, instead of an active, laborious, working help-meet to man. We have, within a year, had considerable experience among opera dancers, whose occupation, indeed, is unfortunately not so much in the open air as might be desired, but which, in its daily study and subsequent practice requires an amount of long-continued muscular energy of the severest character, little recognized or understood by the community. Hard and protracted as this is, it was not intermitted by some, except two weeks before their lying-in, and the pains of

labor were, in every case, most notably diminished in such a manner as could be attributed solely to their peculiar labor, which gives great suppleness of limb, free play of muscle, and that happy union of power and pliability most to be desired. There is reason why the necessities of maternity in all its bearings should make woman less reliable than man for certain duties—but why exercise of these functions in the nineteenth century should be different from the same actions in the sixteenth or eighteenth century, is the question to be solved.

Does it depend upon any peculiar feature in our domestic architecture? Do all these maladies spring from the fact that our houses contain five or six flights of stairs, one above another?

As this reason is urged by many, in all seriousness, it behoves us to answer it without any of the feelings, which perhaps so preposterous a reason might excite.

First, we are willing to allow that to frequently ascend a series of flights of stairs may very probably be inconvenient and painful,

and, even impossible, to any one feeble or diseased in any serious manner; but it should be remembered that the old-fashioned houses had double flights of stairs, while the modern ones have the same number, but placed one above another. Then, owing to the modern conveniences for warming, lighting, watering, and the less necessities for cleaning in consequence, we do not believe that there is so much running over the house as formerly.

Next, we do not imagine that any such exercise could produce, without other ulterior causes, the local diseases complained of, for various reasons. The present women of Switzerland, who are engaged in tending sheep and goats, who follow them day after day, up one mountain-side and down another, jumping from rock to rock, running down the declivities and up the opposite steeps, are not distinguished for peculiar ills, but rather for their robustness. Neither are the German market women of Europe, who walk long distances over uneven ground, where no roads are laid out, with heavy burdens upon their heads or backs, alike when pregnant as otherwise. Nor

are the servants in the very houses alluded to affected by the diseases of their mistresses, yet, they run over the same stairs many times to their mistress' once.

That the great blessing of furnaces is often abused, we are ready to admit; that when improperly used they do burn up the oxygen of the air to be breathed, we know. But when properly constructed and properly managed, we believe that in no manner can a house be so healthfully heated, to say nothing of cheapness, cleanliness, and convenience. This is not the place to argue the question as might be desired; but we must be allowed to say that, in general, the furnace furnished to a house is too small for the work it has to perform, and in consequence it is liable to be pressed so hard as to be over-heated, or if large enough, it may, by neglect of those who have charge of it, become red-hot, and thus burn up the air. It is allowed to get out of repair, and leak out gas into the air-pipes. The house, too, guided by the uncertain feelings of the occupant instead of a reliable thermometer, may be over-heated generally.

But it should not be forgotten that there is no ventilator more efficient, for it constantly brings into the house the pure air of the street, which must push out the already used air in the house, to make room for it. If the air is burned, and thus rendered impure or inefficient, it will undoubtedly aggravate any disease and destroy the general health, but it can scarcely be supposed to cause the local uterine diseases, alleged to spring from it, but rather the diseases of the lungs and heart, and the functions of nutrition, which are generally most affected by the impurities of the atmosphere. Neither are the servants as before said, affected like their enervated mistresses.

The deterioration of the health of females is not general, it is local; and it is not only local, but it is confined, in a great degree, to classes even in that locality. Certain forms of the diseases peculiar to females are better understood and more easily recognised now than formerly, but this merely gives a different name to the ill-health of the sex; and it is not that certain diseases exist now which did not

formerly, or are increased in proportion, but that now they are recognised whenever they exist, whereas formerly they were often mistaken or disregarded.

It is the females of the cities and large towns, imbued with city manners and customs, where these maladies are most rife, and found only in exceptional cases among our poorer classes, who are not exposed to fashionable follies. In cities, all of the better classes of the population live not so much for themselves as for other people; more solicitous as to what Mrs. Grundy may say than for their own comfort and health. They are constantly going somewhere at improper times, and seasons, and hours. So delicate in health that they cannot go out to perform any duty if the sky be a little overcast; in fact, accustomed to spend the most of the time cooped up in the house, dressed, perhaps, too warmly, yet in the evening, no matter how stormy, freezing, or tempestuous, they can ride in a coach, with head and shoulders uncovered; or with clothes well tucked up under their arms, they can walk through slush and mire

to sit for hours in a cold theater, an ill-ventilated vestry or lecture-room, or, worse still, in an over-heated, over-crowded ball-room.

But this is not bad enough; no matter whether it is at the time of the periodic functions or not, the young girl whose constitution is yet in process of formation, or the young matron engaged in the great work for which the division into sexes was created, spends hours in the most outrageous muscular exertion, in dances which would seem to have been invented by some arch enemy of woman, so effectually do they, aided by a too great weight of clothing, shake up the whole frame and dislocate every internal organ pertaining to womanhood. We really think that the polka and its varieties which so jar the frame, have done more than any one single cause, to injure the health of our American women.

We must be allowed to dwell upon this branch of the subject. Just think of the young woman who spends her days with a book or with her needle in the quiet of her own house, not even going out for a walk, save semi-occasionally, when she takes an

omibus at the end of the first block from fatigue. Think of this fragile creature, overcoming this chronic habit, and the languor which her periodic condition imparts, with organs excited, turgid, and enlarged, dancing these muscular dances (so different from the gliding graces of the mazy waltz), then stimulating and aggravating the difficulties by libations of champagne. Think, too, of the cream, ices, oysters and jellies indulged in at this unseasonable hour, and in what quantities ! And then, when every pore is streaming, when the pulse is beating wildly, half-clad, to seek her home through the sleet and frost. Perhaps our lady lives so near that a carriage is not deemed necessary, and what a chill strikes through the India-rubbers in the walk of half-a-dozen houses ; and then to bed in the small hours, perhaps to repeat the same thing every night or two for the season.

This is no fancy picture. You know it, yet you ask me, why is it that this young creature has this and that malady ? All the women of New York, and of the United States (the only country in the world where young

girls of sixteen are indulged in that way), are doing the same foolish thing the whole season through, and you say: "Is it not wonderful that all the women are complaining of this and that; and it must be the English basement houses."

What Fifth Avenue does, the girls who earn their living by dress-making, book-folding, shop-keeping, and the like—factory-girls in the country and the country aristocracy—imitate as far as they are able. But it is not night after night, and it alternates with more active and out-of-door daily life, and the disastrous results to health are not so noticeable.

Is not this a suicidal epidemic?

But fashion, which has done so much for the injury of our women, has done some little lately to ameliorate their condition. The expansive crinoline and modern hoops have reduced the number and weight of the skirts which pressed so fearfully, and which still so injuriously weigh upon the abdominal viscera. But although the words of eloquent warning so forcibly uttered by Miss Catherine Sedgwick have had so little effect upon her country-

women in introducing the general wearing of skirts held up by the shoulders, we will reiterate the cry of "Shoulder-straps, shoulder-straps!" till it shall awaken every mother to the dangers hanging over her own child, every woman to the oppressive cincture hanging around her own waist, pressing upon vital organs till they are forced into unnatural situations, destroying the capillary circulation in the skin and external layers of vessels; creating deep-seated congestions, resulting in chronic if not life-long weaknesses, which make life wearisome and its duties impossible.

But it is useless, perhaps, to reiterate the cry of "Shoulder-straps," unless we can show to those who are not sufficiently ingenious to make a simple waist with shoulder-straps upon which the skirts may all button, some easy and effectual manner by which all this may be accomplished. A corset manufactured by Douglas and Sherwood of this city, answers this end in a most complete manner; and so for the last time we will utter the warning implied in the watchword of "Shoulder-straps!"

One other fruitful source of the many nervous and debilitating causes of woman's present degeneracy cannot be passed by in silence, for it is so wide-spread over the land, so early developed, so insidious in its growth, so utterly incurable, that the disordered mind is less and less able to follow the promptings of its own better judgment, or even the threats and entreaties of friends. It is a delicate matter to broach, yet when it is a subject which is of such vast importance, which is noted as fearfully prevalent in the American community, and to a far greater degree, probably, than among the women of any other country in the world, why should we shirk the subject? why hesitate to say plainly and without quibble that personal abuse lies at the root of much of the feebleness, nervousness, pale, waxen-facedness and general good-for-nothingness of the entire community? It is, indeed, a convincing proof of the actual chastity of the American females, but its physical results are far worse than those which would proceed from criminal immoralities.

This is one of the greatest evils of our

boarding-school educational system, where the advent of one girl thus corrupted will introduce a moral epidemic into this large family of pubescent, hot-bed brought-up girls, worse for the ultimate well-being of this little community than the virulent scourge of scarlatina; for while the latter takes its quota and at once consigns them to an early grave, the former but toys with its victims, destroying the mind and unnerving the body. Foreigners are especially struck with this fact as the cause of much of the physical disease of our young women. They recognize it in the physique, in the sodden, colorless countenance, the lack-luster eye, in the dreamy indolence, the general carriage, the constant demeanor indicative of distrust, mingled boldness and timidity, and a series of anomalous combinations which mark this genus of physical and moral decay.

This is not a matter within the scope of general investigation; truth is not to be expected from its *habitués*, parents are deceived respecting it, believing rather what they wish than what they fear. Even the physician can

but suspect, till time develops more fully by hysterias, epilepsies, spinal irritations, and a train of symptoms unmistakable even if the finally extorted confession of the poor victim did not render the matter clear. Marriage does, indeed, often arrest this final catastrophe, and thus apparently shifts the responsibility upon other shoulders, and to the "injurious effects of early marriages," to the "ills of maternity," are ascribed the results of previous personal abuse.

For statistics and further information on this all-important subject, we must refer the reader to the opinions of physicians who have the charge of our retreats for the insane, lunatic asylums and the like ; to the discriminating physicians of the families of the upper classes—stimulated alike by food, drinks, scenes where ease is predominant, where indolence is the habit and novel-reading is the occupation—for further particulars on a subject here but barely alluded to.

But now, having treated of venial errors, sins against one's own self, for which self is punished, and for which self may, perhaps, be al-

lowed to stand forgiven, if the suicide is to be forgiven, we must turn to sins of deeper dye; sins which admit of no palliation, sins not only against self, but sins against God, which no plea of ignorance can avail, for they are not the sins of the ignorant, the poor, and the starving, but the sins of the rich, and the lofty, and the educated.

This is a theme from which we would gladly shrink, both from the delicacy of the subject and from conscious inability to treat it as it deserves; to bring before you the most horrid social enormity of this age, this city, and this world, and to hold it up to you in such a light as to make you all feel it, in its craven cowardice, its consequent bodily, mental and moral degeneracy, its soul-destroying wickedness. We look with a shudder upon the poor ignorant Hindoo woman, who from the love for her child which agonizes her mother's heart when, in the fervor of her religious enthusiasm, she sacrifices her beloved offspring at the feet of Juggernaut or in the turbid waves of the sacred Ganges, yet we have not a pang, nor even a word of reprobation, for the human sacrifices

of the unborn thousands annually immolated in the city of New York before the blood-worshiped Moloch of fashion. From no excess of religious faith in even a false, idolatrous god are such hecatombs of human beings slain, but our women, from a devotion to dress and vain pride of outward show, become murderesses of their own children, and do literally in their own bodies become whitened sepulchers, pallid with the diseases consequent upon such unrighteous acts, and sepulchral in thought and tone of voice from the remorse which always follows a guilty action.

Infanticide is the great, glaring, and fearfully prevalent sin of the women of New York, as immorality, drunkenness, gaming, etc., are the prevailing sins of the female portion of the community of other cities and countries of the world. We take the liberty of speaking freely and plainly upon a topic which the pulpit shirks, and the community winks at. We shall speak plainly what we know, and strongly what we feel. The moral sense of the community is at a fearful pass. *Each individual claims to decide for herself whether or not to have*

*children.* But if this right of option is granted, does it permit the destruction of the child? "But," says the apologetic parent, "children are so expensive; the demands of society, the cost for food, clothing, education, is so great that we could not decently live with such a family." Another, with means in abundance, says: "That the care of children is such a slavery;" this one is fond of show and company, that one intends to go to Europe, and neither can be "bothered with young ones." These are the excuses for not procreating children, and the right not to do so we will not discuss now; but are these good reasons for *murder*? Is it not arrant laziness, sheer, craven, culpable cowardice, which is at the bottom of this base *aet*? Are you not dastardly shirking your duty, the duty of your life appointed you by the Creator? Have you the right to choose an indolent, selfish life, neglecting the work God has appointed you to perform? Are you the man who encourages your wife to such a villainous procedure? or are you the woman whose love for gewgaws and trinkets prompts to the outrage against the

heavenly sanctity of a true woman's nature? Whichever you are, you are a pitiful, God-for-saken wretch, and all true humanity despises you and hoots at you.

You have not even the unjustifiable but possibly excusable desire of the poor girl, the prey of the vile seducer, who bears in her own breast the pitiable evidence of another's crime. You voluntarily commit murder.

No, not murder, you say, for "there has not been any life in the child." Do not attempt to evade even to man a crime which cannot be hidden from the All-seeing. The poor mother has not herself felt the life of the child perhaps, but that is a quibble only of the laws of man, founded indeed upon the view, now universally recognized as incorrect, that the child's life began when its movements were first strong enough to be perceptible. There is, in fact, no moment after conception when it can be said that the child has not life, and the crime of destroying human life is as heinous and as sure before the period of "quickening" has been attained as afterward. But you still defend your horrible deed by saying: "Well,

if there be, as you say, this mere animal life, equivalent at the most to simple vitality, there is no mind, no soul destroyed, and that therefore there is no crime committed." Just so surely as one would destroy and root out of existence all the fowl in the world by destroying all the eggs in existence, so certain is it that you do by your act destroy the animal man in the egg and the soul which animates it. When is the period that intelligence comes to the infant? Are its feeble first strug- glings any evidence of its presence? Has it any appreciable quantity at birth? Has it any valuable, useful quantity even when a year old? When, then, is it, that destruction is harm- less or comparatively sinless? While awaiting your metaphysical answer, I will tell you when it is sinful. Murder is always sinful, and mur- der is the wilful destruction of a human being at any period of its existence, from its earliest germinal embryo to its final, simple, animal ex- istence in aged decrepitude and complete mental imbecility.

We make these statements thus fully and plainly because of the frequency of this sin,

often committed under the erroneous idea that no wrong deed is committed provided that "life has not been felt," by women who would not willingly do such a wrong. The amount of this crime can be testified to by any observing physician, and the half is probably concealed even from them.

This subject is not foreign to the theme of this paper, for it is not only a moral evil, but a physical wrong. The health of the mother suffers materially from the violence done to her system, and from the shock to her nervous sense. Whether it is effected by powerful drugs or by mechanical and instrumental interference, the result is deleterious to the animal economy. The organs are often seriously lacerated, punctured, irritated, or inflamed, producing temporary disease which threatens and not unfrequently destroys life, and also when apparently cured, leaves the organs cicatrized, contracted, maimed, in distorted shapes and unnatural positions, in a state of sub-acute inflammation or chronic congestion, for all after-years a source of pain and weakness, and a fruitful origin of neuralgics, debilities, and

miseries. Be assured this is not exaggerated, for we cannot recall to mind an individual who has been guilty of this crime (for it must be called a crime, under every aspect), who has not suffered for many years afterward in consequence. And when the health is finally restored, the freshness of life has gone, and the vigor of mind and energy of body have forever departed. Languor and listlessness have become a second nature by habit.

Were the secrets committed to the sacred keeping of a physician allowed to be exposed to the world, we could convince you by a flood of witnessing cases which have come under our own observation, and which could be corroborated by thousands of medical men in this city and country, that we have barely broached the subject, and that the facts are not even fully shadowed forth.

An overweening desire for luxury, dress and fashion; sometimes simple indolence; sometimes even the laudable determination not to produce children who will inherit constitutional diseases, induces many to take various precautionary measures against conception.

We have heard clergymen state "that a man should control the size of his family as well as a farmer his flocks; that he should not have a larger stock than he can house and feed; that this was in the power of every one; that the mind was given to control the appetites; that the lower classes were overrunning with children, and the poorer the parents the more prolific they became." Yes, and the more healthy and vigorous. It is these women who do not pretend to guide the course of events, or make the laws of Nature conform to their wishes, who are in health and actually doing the work of the world, while the wise in their own conceit are sufferers, invalids, and useless. The laws of Nature, and the necessities of our existence implanted by an overruling Providence, cannot be contravened without detriment to the system. Local congestions, nervous affections and debilities are the direct and indisputable results of the *coitus imperfecti*, *tegumenta extaria*, *ablutiones gelidæ*, *infusiones astringentes*, *etcetera*, so commonly employed by the community, who are so ignorant on all these matters, and who are in fact substituting

for one imaginary difficulty in prospect, a host of ills that will leave no rest or comfort to be found.

On this subject there is great ignorance and great ills resulting. Inquiry of any gynecologist will convince the most skeptical that the general employment of any means for the prevention of conception is fraught with injury to the female certainly, if not to the other sex also. Exactly how these evils are effected is not perhaps of easy explanation, for all the physiological laws are not fully known, but of this fact there is no mistake, and reasonably enough, for sexual congress is thus rendered but a species of self-abuse.

We must leave this question thus imperfectly touched upon, for your own reflections. It is one of vast importance to the physical well-being of the American woman, but it cannot be discussed advantageously in a single article. We could not in conscience have omitted so important a cause of the physical decline of the health of our women without alluding to it, and less could scarcely be said. In your reflections take one guide to correct deduc-

tions. Start with the firm belief that God's laws cannot be discarded, superseded, or neglected with impunity.

It may be remarked that we have not alluded to either inherited or contracted constitutional diseases which result from immoralities either of ancestors or from the husband's criminalities, or from woman's personal debasement. We have not alluded to them principally because they are far less common than some would fain make it appear. With all their follies, the American women are virtuous; those to the contrary, we are confident, being rare exceptions. This is almost as true of the American husbands, the great majority of whom are true to their marriage-vows, and in proportion—even in the tainted cities, the hot-beds of vice—far greater than in any other land of Christendom. That many women do thus suffer is true; and where this suffering arises from the sins of either ancestors or husbands, she can only have our deepest sympathies, and surely none can more deservedly claim them! But where moral sin has brought with it physical disease, we can add nothing

to the teachings of Holy Writ and of past centuries. "The way of the transgressor is hard," even in this nineteenth century, for the truths of time are the truths of eternity. Women can still do something. They have yet a work to perform. Strip off your follies, your profligacies. Live for something better than dress and fashion, and that ease and self-indulgence which like a coy maiden, when courted most, furthest retires. Accept your earthly mission to elevate man, to lift him above the perishing dross and sickly vanities of this world :

"Allure to brighter worlds, and *lead the way.*"

If the sins of the past can only be alleviated, in the future they may be prevented. Be a mother to your children; be a companion for your boys and girls. The follies of the young are too often only the manifestation of the sins of the mother, sins of omission, of neglect of the child's thought, which instead of being trained, as the gardener inclines the twig, is allowed to be blown out by every passing breeze. Fill your child's mind full; stuff it to repletion with the good, and there

will be no room for the bad to get in. You know how to satisfy the demands of his stomach, yet you do not attempt to cater for his nobler mental and moral nature. Be a companion for your children. Teach them that if weaned from your breast they are not put away from your heart, and from thence let them still draw their spirit as they before found their life's blood! Be a mother!

“ My ear is pained,  
My soul is sick with every day’s report  
Of wrong and outrage with which each heart is filled.”

A mother! The fashionable woman whom we once met dancing wantonly at a city ball when her only child lay at home sickening with scarlet fever, is not the type we urge you to copy. She was but an ostrich who leaves its young on the desert sands. No, be a true mother, instinct with all the holy attributes of maternity. There are many of you who can, like us, point to the mansions of the blest for the type of a mother not dead, for she yet lives in our hearts, stirring us up with a sweet, soft voice, yet ringing louder than clarion blasts through our inmost souls, to duty.

Ah! if you will but accept the noble office you are called upon to perform, if you will but *occupy* the heart of your husband, if you will but fold your children into your own selves, know their inmost thoughts, be their confidant, their life-spring, their guide, "truant husbands," as they are called, sons designated as "only a little wild," will be rare, and the world will be renovated. To these pure joys will the true woman say dress and fashion are preferable?

Like all good actions, these will rebound with blessings. In the exercise of these duties, in the cultivation of home joys and affections, the exposures and consequent diseases will not be met with. Life will not be a state of constant invalidism. Will you think of these things?

We need not speak here of the habit of so many women of indiscriminate doctoring, taking of medicines whose virtues are seen only in newspaper advertisements, or indeed in the constant use of any medicines. The evils of over-dosing have been sufficiently dilated upon, but we may be permitted to especially

mention the evils arising from the profuse drinking of the waters of various mineral springs, without any regard to the character of the diseases of the individual. It is now so general a custom for the better portion of the community to frequent these summer resorts, and without professional advice to drink inordinately of the waters, that a word of caution seems especially necessary. Much local as well as general injury is often the result.

There are many other well-known indulgences which vitiate the health, which have not even been mentioned, but as most of them are apparent to all, and as we can add nothing new to what others have repeatedly said, we shall leave them without any further allusion.

The redemption of the sex from their alleged degraded condition as dependent upon and inferior to man, is one of the great controversial topics of the day. If we place ourselves in opposition to this reform movement, it must be seen from the general tenor of these remarks that it is not from any skepticism respecting her native capacity (for the quickness of woman's intellect, the energy of woman's

resolve, and the persistency of woman's determination are facts generally admitted, and we have endeavored to prove, or at least have asserted our belief, in her natural physical strength). Any opposition must therefore arise from her own slavery to forms, and customs and observances, from being tied down by fashion and folly. They should remember

“ — who would be free,  
*Themselves must strike the blow,*”

and not only assert their independence, but vindicate their claim to equality, not with chalk, powder, and balls, or blood-rouge-stained cheeks, but by actual attainments and victories over self-degeneracy. At the bottom of all superiority is physical vigor. An inferior mind, backed by robust health, can accomplish all that it undertakes, but tortured by disease, and restrained by debility, the proudest intellect is futile to obtain results. The height of earthly desire can only be striven for with earnestness, to say nothing of attainment, with the *mens sana in corpore sano*, a healthy mind in a healthy body.

Readers, we have written these pages not willingly, but after much thoughtful deliberation, and after frequent consultations with those whose advice one who can be so happy as to obtain it, is compelled to follow, and in accordance with an irresistible feeling of duty. Simple and well-known as what we have said may be to many, it has cost some resolution to say it. It may cost you more resolution to follow its instructions. We stand only as a guide-post, showing whither lead the two roads: it is for you to choose which to follow.

## B.

*Extract from the Minutes of the Proceedings of the Presbyterian Assembly (Old School), held in New York, May, 1869.*

..... "This Assembly regards the destruction by parents of their own offspring before birth with abhorrence; as a crime against God and against nature; and as the frequency of such murders can be no longer concealed, we hereby warn those that are guilty of this crime, that except they repent, they cannot inherit eternal life."

## C.

*From the London Saturday Review—article,  
“Modern Mothers.”*

..... “It may seem a harsh thing to say, but it is none the less true, society has put maternity out of fashion, and the nursery is, nine times out of ten, a place of punishment, not of pleasure, to the modern mother. Two points connected with this subject are of growing importance at the present time—the one is the increasing disinclination of married women to be mothers at all; the other, the large number of those who, being mothers, will not, or cannot nurse their own children.”

## D.

*Extract from Pastoral Letter of Bishop Coxe, of  
the Diocese of Western New York, dated Janu-  
ary 30, 1869.*

..... “I have warned my flock against the blood-guiltiness of infanticide. If any doubt existed heretofore as to the propriety of my warnings on the subject, they must now dis-

appear before the fact that the world itself is beginning to be terrified by the practical results of the sacrifices to Moloch which defile our land.

“Again, I warn you that they who do such things cannot inherit eternal life. If there be a special damnation for those who ‘shed innocent blood,’ what must be the portion of those who have no mercy upon their own flesh?”

THE END.

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AND

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BY

AUGUSTUS K. GARDNER, A.M., M.D.

LATE PROFESSOR OF DISEASES OF FEMALES AND CLINICAL MIDWIFERY IN THE  
NEW YORK MEDICAL COLLEGE

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